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MARCH 25, 1953

The Australian WOMEN'S WEEKLY

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The Australian WOMEN'S WEEKLY

MARCH 25, 1953 — Vol. 20, No. 43

MONEY WELL SPENT

IN welcoming new students to Sydney University, the Chancellor, Sir Charles Bickerton Blackburn, told them that the University cost the public about £1,000,000 a year.

Costs vary in different States, according to endowments and bequests.

In Western Australia the University is free to those able to pass a matriculation examination.

In other States scholarships enable gifted students to undertake long courses of study to fit them for professions.

But, whatever the cost, no one would query the wisdom of the expenditure.

The achievements of Australian doctors, scientists, engineers, and barristers demonstrate that this money is returned many times in service to the community.

Increasing numbers of overseas students, including Asiatics, are studying at Australian universities.

Many of them do so under Australian grants made for the purpose.

Because freedom of speech and thought is among the essentials of university life, the benefits of students of many nationalities working and playing together cannot be overestimated.

As well as returning to their countries equipped for the life work they have chosen, these young people will carry with them an understanding of the Australian viewpoint which they could scarcely have achieved otherwise.

Also, young Australians are learning the viewpoint of the people of other nations.

Such mutual understanding must have an important bearing on the future of this country.

Our cover:

● The model on the cover is wearing a lovely cocktail dress of apricot organza designed by Australian Robert Schulz. The photograph was taken by Alec Murray at the Coronation year Spring Collections in London. Other striking fashions from the collections are shown on page 19.

This week:

● On pages 12 and 13 is a story about the maids of honor who will be trainbearers to the Queen at the Coronation. In times gone by, Royal maids of honor did much more than attend the monarch at the ceremony of crowning. To them fell the duties of entertaining distinguished visitors, their families and entourages. The Court was something of a house party, with visitors staying much longer than is the custom now.

● Foxhunter, the champion English horse which appears in color on pages 16 and 17 with his master, Lt.-Col. Harry Llewellyn (due to arrive in Sydney next week to judge at the Royal Easter Show) gets a big fan mail, especially from children. At last year's Royal Horse Show at Windsor, Foxhunter knocked over every jump with a backward flick of his hind hoofs. It was announced over the loudspeakers that Foxhunter was "misbehaving" and would be "spoken to" by his master. When Foxhunter made the second and perfect round of the ring, the crowd roared its delighted approval, not only of the joke, but of the teamwork which made it possible.

Next week:

● There is excitement in the Bellingen, N.S.W., home of Mr. and Mrs. Percy Sara, parents of the famous Quads. The Saras are packing to go to England on a visit to Betty Sara's mother. Next week we will have a warm and appealing story about the preparations that are going on both in Australia and England for this event. The story is illustrated with color pictures of the Quads and of their grandparents in England. The Quads, incidentally, wax healthy and are quite unconcerned about the bustle which surrounds them.

Kon-Tiki scientist returns to Pacific island

Book review by AINSLIE BAKER

WHEN in 1947 the Kon-Tiki expedition's raft was wrecked on the remote Pacific island of Raroia (directly north of Tahiti), its friendly natives invited the crew to return.

In 1949 one of the six, the Swedish ethnologist Bengt Danielsson, did so and took his wife with him.

Bengt Danielsson tells the story of their visit in "The Happy Island."

They stayed for a year, their intention being to live the everyday life of a South Seas coral island long enough to discover in what ways it was better or worse than civilised everyday life.

The author and his wife, who considered their stay particularly fortunate because no white man had previously undermined the Raroians' confidence or abused their friendship, sum up as follows:

Credit: Absence of noise, no clock watching (nervous diseases are unknown), no duties, no etiquette, no fashion to follow, no material anxieties.

Debit: Twenty-five or thirty days annually of prostrating heat, isolation in the case of serious illness, uncertain arrival of supplies needed to alleviate monotony of the island's natural food resources.

As the Danielssons were being rowed ashore, the Raroians began a song of welcome. It was quite easily recognisable as a Swedish song the crew of the wrecked raft had sung to their hosts two years before.

The Peruvian coconut the Kon-Tiki men had planted on the island was found to be a flourishing palm-tree three feet high. The chief, Teka, had surrounded it by a fence.

Danielsson learned that after the Kon-Tiki raft had left Raroia, the inhabitants declared it a holiday and for a week gave themselves up to eating their way through the 1500 tins of foodstuff the expedition had left behind.

The less conservative Raroians made one huge dish by opening every different tin they could lay hands on and mixing the contents together. Others ate only pineapple or meat.

The author details family life thus:

Monday: Make copra, rest. Tuesday: Talk to friends, fish. Wednesday: Rest, talk to friends. Thursday: Read Bible, talk to friends. Friday: Make copra, rest. Saturday: Rest, talk to friends. Sunday: Church, talk to friends.

For a woman, housework and singing replace fishing and talking to friends.

Monthly expenditure of the Danielssons (they lived rent free as honored guests) was:

Food, £14/7/4; kerosene, £1/3/6; medicine, £1/16/9; transport, nil; entertainment nil; water, nil—a total of £17/7/7.

The author has an easy pleasantly relaxed style, and his book will appeal to all who have an interest in the South Sea islands.

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Their kiss was interrupted by a voice saying, "Oh, there you are, Keith. You did say you'd help me."

Straight on from here

By NANCE DONKIN

ILLUSTRATED BY MILLS

SO many things and people and events had conspired to keep the Fosters apart for five years that Carol, waiting at Mascot to meet Keith's plane, could not remember whether her mother's broken leg or her sister Jenny's wedding had been the first.

The next had been her father's long illness. What then? Mother had gone to live with Jenny, and Carol, about to book her passage for England to join Keith, had a cable: "Leaving for Europe immediately, one year roving commission, impossible you join me yet. Letter follows."

That year had spread into almost two before a cable had arrived which sent her spinning round in an ecstatic frenzy of preparations. "Can you join me Paris beginning May six months stop New job apartment ready me too."

That was when her appendix, which had apparently been simmering gently for years, had erupted with an almost volcanic fury. The complication that followed had kept her in bed for weeks. By then the six months in Paris were almost up and Keith was about to leave for America.

He wrote:

"Rotten luck, darling. I shall try to pull strings and get you to the States later on, but the dollar position is grim. The paper is pretty generous, but draws the line at dollars for wives, and it would cost us the earth to pay for the trip ourselves. I shall definitely come home from here, and will it be good to have a wife again! I shall demand all the privileges—warmed slippers by the fire, my favorite pipe waiting, you in a frilly apron fussing gently about an immaculate kitchen. P.S.: For your next husband choose someone not in the newspaper game."

Carol had grinned through her tears over that letter. Keith must have been feeling lonely or sick when he wrote it, because a fussy, frilly, "little woman" type of wife would have driven him silly in a week.

Their marriage, five years old when he went to England as overseas correspondent in 1947, had been entirely without fusses and frills. It had stood up to all its wartime tests magnificently, and they both had known they had something durable and worth while.

Would five years of separation have torn a hole in the strong fabric they had woven? The Carol who waited at Mascot, her fingers playing nervously in the fat leather arms of the chair, was not twenty-five but thirty, and in the five years she had cut out for herself a most successful pattern for living alone.

Though all her living had been directed towards this day when Keith would be home, she wondered again how things would work out. She had changed a great deal, and Keith must have altered tremendously. She could sense that from his letters. His life had been so filled with incident, with drama, with the sound and fury of international affairs, he could scarcely be expected, she thought, to adapt himself at once to suburban life or even to the tight circle of marriage.

Her thoughts flowing to the rhythm of aeroplanes constantly taking off and arriving, Carol told herself again that she had no illusions. Keith had never been exactly the monastic type; he was attractive to women, and, though he had always been particular of choice in women friends, there would certainly have been female companionship available at any time.

Her own life had not been bare of male company, but she had moved mostly in a crowd, an interesting group from which occasionally a male face had separated itself to offer diversion. There had been nothing serious.

Carol had flown over from Melbourne five days ago, thinking that some time in a different environment would give her an opportunity to adjust herself. Now, with the hum of arrival and departure, the constant surge of people and polite mechanical utterances of the loud-speaker breaking incessantly into her thoughts, she knew she was as far away from a formula as ever.

She must wait until Keith came. Would she be meeting a stranger or could they at once fit into the old pattern? How did you greet a husband returning after five years? It had been different during the war, with the threat of permanent separation so constant. Then emotion took charge immediately. This was another situation.

She had no more time for thinking. The loud-speaker crackled, then began to intone "Flight 404 from Honolulu is now . . ." It was Keith's plane. Carol rose quickly, biting her lips. Her throat was bitter with a sick, frightened taste and her head felt light and fuzzy as she walked slowly forward.

The plane landed and people quickly descended, chatting excitedly, exchanging addresses, assurances of future meetings.

Carol saw Keith's eyes sweep anxiously across the group of people waiting, waving, blowing kisses. His eyes passed over her, then blinked back with astonishment. She raised an arm in acknowledgment and went reluctantly to the meeting. She would rather have been doing anything but this.

Keith stood in front of her and she raised her eyes and smiled. He was an enormous man in a belted overcoat and a pulled-down hat. She had never seen him wear anything on his head but an Army cap before. And he had put on weight, at least two stone. He had always been much too thin for his height and broad shoulders and the extra weight suited him, but added to the difference.

She stood silent, waiting. He didn't have an accent exactly, but there was a pleasant, unusual drawl in his voice as he said: "Some hat, Carol! Cheer up, honey, I'm not going to eat you."

He dropped his bag and took her hands. "It's wonderful to see you, Carol. Don't I rate a welcome-traveller kiss?" as he politely removed his hat.

Their cool kiss was interrupted by an impatient voice.

"There you are, Keith. You did say you'd help me with those dreadful telegrams, and the customs people. I'm feeling absolutely whacked and I just can't think straight."

She turned to Carol. "You're Keith's wife, of course. Lucky you, he's nice, much nicer than what I picked out of the lucky dip. I'll just borrow him for a few minutes, dear. I can't face customs without moral support and as my family

To page 54

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MARRIAGE MARKET

By NORMA MANSFIELD

THE programme director of KJAI had hired secretaries through the Kenne Agency for the past three years and they had all served him well.

The only fault they had had—a fault common to all of them, but not traceable to a defection on the agency's part—had been a tendency to marry.

None of them had been with Dan Stuart for longer than six months and some of them had left sooner, but since the agency required that its secretaries be as attractive as they were competent and as amiable as they were attractive, the turnover was bound to be high.

Dan approved marriage. At thirty he was even thinking about it seriously for himself, so seriously that he had pencilled a tentative note on the recently completed blueprint he had drawn up for success.

By the time he was thirty-five, the note noted, he should have begun an intelligent search for a suitable wife. Meantime, however, a good secretary was more important.

This new girl the agency had sent, Jennie Powell, was attractive. She seemed amiable and she was certainly competent, but nevertheless Dan intended to fire her as soon as he had time to analyse why he felt he should.

She was decorative and he had nothing against that. She kept herself trim, and her self was charmingly designed for trimming. She was quiet and courteous. She was helpful. Or was she?

"Miss Powell——" Dan began, but the inter-office phone rang, interrupting him.

A dozen different times during the two weeks the girl had been here, at exactly the moment Dan chose to discover what he didn't approve about Jennie Powell, he had been distracted by an emergency. This was one more time. The old man wanted to see him right away.

"Another employee suggestion has come in and Mr. Baxter wants to discuss it with you," she said. "It concerns a new fifteen-minute fill-in programme."

She found a pad of paper for him and a pencil; she made a notation for herself reminding her of his whereabouts; she waited for further instructions.

All these gestures were, of course, commendable, but the moment her glance met Dan's, mirth permeated his office. It didn't arise from him, and his own sharp eyes assured him hers were not laughing, and yet this curious merriment hung in the room—and had for days. It was insidious and it was unnerving.

"Miss Powell."

"Yes," she said.

"I am beginning to feel that, under the circumstances, and considering my particular needs in a secretary—needs which are, I admit, somewhat arbitrary because I, myself, am perhaps somewhat arbitrary——"

He couldn't continue because he didn't consider himself arbitrary, never had, never would, and also he was stammering. This kind of thing, however, had begun to happen to him every day.

He left the office. You could say he fled. He did. But if he had hoped to regain his composure talking to white-haired Ben Baxter, the ageing but indestructible owner of KJAI, he had sought the wrong source.

One of the employees had put a suggestion into the box, and it began to offend Dan's superb radio sense as soon as he heard it. Ben Baxter, however, called it undiluted genius.

"A fifteen-minute fill-in, five days a week, ad lib. You know, Dan, that here in KJAI we have the most intelligent office personnel available in the North-west. They were hired because they were smart, and now they are going to have their opportunity, every one of them, to speak, to be heard, to be dignified by recognition as the typical humans they are, the little people, the unsung multitude."

"Oh, no, no!" Dan said, in terrified petition.

"Ad lib, Dan. A fill-in programme, unpatterned, unrehearsed, in which KJAI examines the world or the people in the world, outer space, inner space, food, philosophy—anything they choose to discuss. If they feel like it, let them make music. At least three of our office force play in our civic symphony; did you know that?"

Dan knew that. He also knew what the rating would be on a three-piece symphony orchestra piped to housewives any morning.

"It's fantastic."

"I knew you'd see its possibilities," the old man said. "I give it to you. I charge you with it. And there will be no stars. Remember that, Dan. There will be no stars."

"I can write you a guarantee on that," Dan said.

He argued, but the old man said the programme would be good for Dan, too. Keep him from getting stuffy. Make him elastic.

"And don't come sobbing back here to me with it," he said as Dan was leaving the office, defeated, twenty minutes later. "I'm an old man and I never was as smart as you are. Look up the girl who made the suggestion and put her to work on it. Wait a minute. I'll find the name. Powell—that's it, Jennie Powell. You know her?"

"In a reluctant way, yes," Dan said.

"Good, good."

But it wasn't good, and Dan didn't pretend he thought it was. He made a particular point of avoiding pretence with Jennie. He spoke his thoughts.

She was sympathetic. "I know," she said. "It scares you. It isn't routine."

"Explain." He hadn't quarrelled with her yet. This seemed the time.

"May I, Mr. Stuart?"

He sat down and folded his arms and looked at his tweed knees.

"Some people," she said, "cut life into little pieces and fit it into squares. When pieces don't fit they throw them away. It's a game. You play it by yourself, and after a while you come up with the same squares and the same pieces to fit into them, and then you've won. It ends the game, of course, but that doesn't matter, because you're the only one who doesn't know the game is over."

"Miss Powell," Dan said, "you thought up this programme and you should have it. It doesn't make sense, and neither do you. Please get me Fogarty." Fogarty was station manager at KJAI.

Ben Baxter had certainly discussed this idea with him, and by this time the Irishman might have started an offset.

Jennie turned from the telephone. "Mr. Fogarty says to tell you he can wiggle his ears, and one of the office boys has a trained duck, but otherwise he has no suggestions. He's leaving to-morrow for New York, and please don't spoil his last few hours at home."

Jennie cradled the telephone receiver. "When do we start?" she said.

"You start any time, but don't come sobbing to me about this thing. I'm a young man and I'm too smart to get stuck with it. And there will be no stars. Remember that. There will be no stars."

"No stars," she said. "Yes, sir." Correct. Respectful. And bursting with secret mirth.

Dan went looking for Fogarty.

Matt Fogarty, red-faced and overweight, had been with KJAI through all of its life and most of his own.

He had seen it waver to its feet, he had helped it strangle three competitors, and now he was concerned with building its television. What did a few wasted fifteen minutes on a morning radio schedule matter to Fogarty?

"Let the old man play," Fogarty said. "He's earned the right. Forget the thing. Write it off. Turn it over to the switchboard operators and don't listen to it. It'll die. You won't have to push."

"I have established a reputation on KJAI," Dan began earnestly, but Fogarty interrupted him.

"What good'll it do you when you're dead? And I'm telling you, Dan, it'll kill you if you don't learn to ease off. When you get to be my age you'll know some of the knots are going to slip, no matter how tight you tie them. What you have to learn is which ones you shouldn't try to tie at all."

As Dan was leaving, he said, "The old man's going with me, if that eases any of your aches."

It eased none of Dan's aches, and his visit from Jack, one of the engineers, didn't soothe him, either.

Jack had been through a war. He was married. He'd seen real trouble. Anyway, he said, there were so many hams on radio already, who'd know the difference.

"But you'll do the programme for me?"

"Sure," Jack said. "Sure. I've been burned before."

"You fix it up with control. And a girl named Jennie Powell will supervise."

Mrs. Surrey, in charge of KJAI's publicity, wore her grey hair in a distinguished bob, attended symphonies and gave little at-homes.

And Mrs. Surrey, too, felt that Dan had allowed himself to become overwrought.

"We'll drop it out of our minds." Her shrug was dainty. "We won't say it's good. We won't say it's bad. People won't know what to think. But don't open it to a studio audience. We'll call it Ad Lib, and no one can claim we aren't honest."

Dan still thought KJAI would take a

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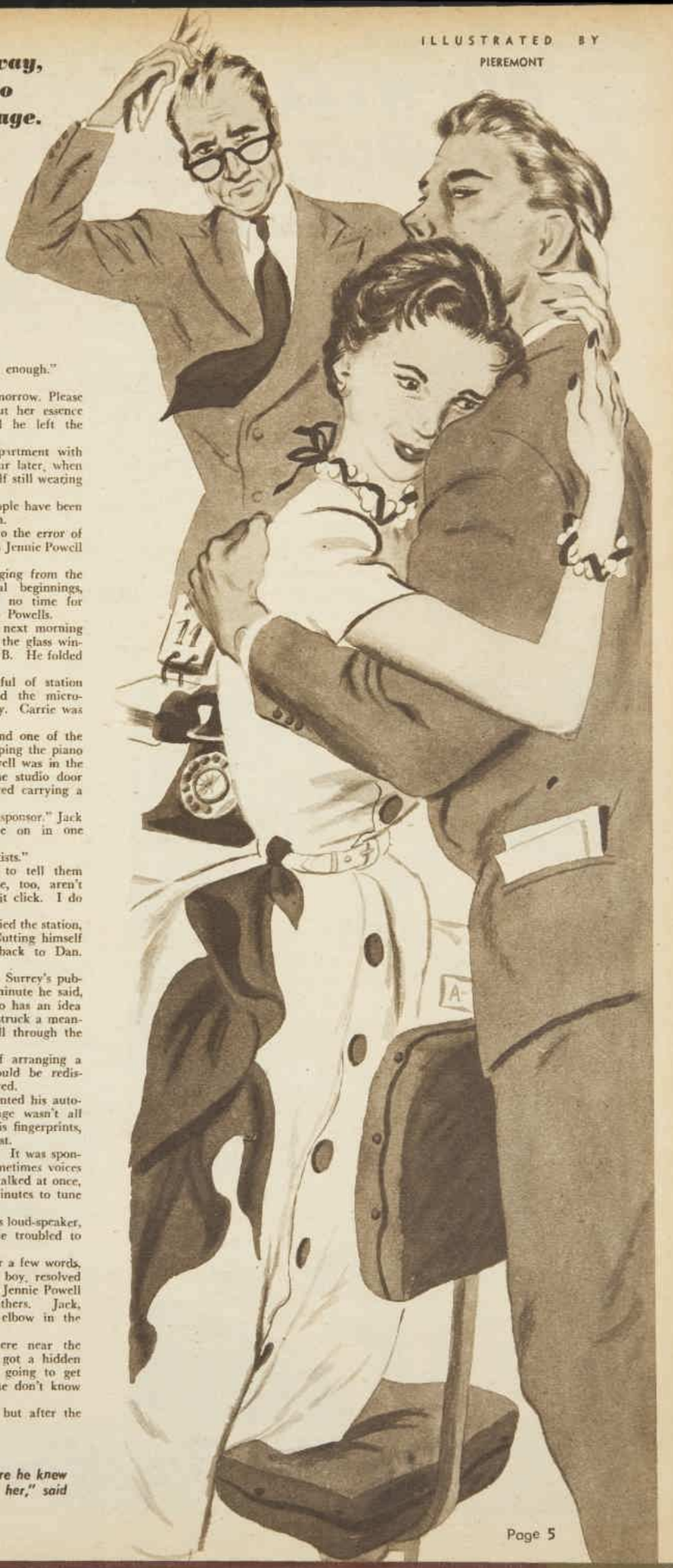
She was a model secretary in every way, but too distracting for a young man who couldn't make up his mind about marriage.

ILLUSTRATED BY PIEREMONT



ing from it. "For instance," he said, "do you have a talent? Are you prepared to help programme?"

"I play the saxophone," Mrs. Surrey said quietly.

"Thank you," Dan said, confused. "Thank you very much."

He was still shocked, five minutes later, interviewing the chief of police.

"I suppose," he said bitterly, "you play the horses."

The recording had to be made again.

During the next week some of the fleet went into dry dock, there were fire alarms in the heart of the business district, two nine-year-olds got lost in the mountains on a blackberrying expedition, and the national administration admitted having made a mistake.

The networks were red hot for three days. Dan, weaving his competent way through an overlapping and interlocking series of programme schedulings, ignored Ad Lib.

When Jennie was in the office with him she was taking dictation or answering his telephone, and when she wasn't in the office with him he didn't care where she was—he told himself.

Fogarty called from New York to say he and the old man were flying over to Paris. They'd be back in a couple of days. Something new in color television had popped over there, or the French thought it had.

"How are things?" he said, and Dan could report in a firm voice that things were dandy.

The first suspicion Dan had that things weren't dandy came ten days after Fogarty had run, the coward. Jack came into his office, borrowed a cigarette and sat down.

"You didn't tell me the kid has a voice."

"A voice for what?"

"She sings," Jack said solemnly. "She's got this whisper, about the size of one straw out of an old wet broom, but it's pure meadowlark. We go on in ten minutes. I want you to listen to it. She won't let me build it up."

"Nothing doing," Dan said. "No stars. Besides, nobody's noticed the programme. We haven't had a single call. We've had no letters."

"Look who's playing ostrich. We got three letters yesterday."

"Who's we?" Dan said sharply.

"Ad Libbers. Jennie handles the mail."

"You play a piccolo, I suppose?"

Jack was modest. "I do imitations. If you want to hear a hot tip, though, you ought to come in when Carrie's doing."

"Carrie?"

"Carrie Surrey."

No one, in Dan's recollection, had called the elegant publicity director by her first name. He couldn't summon a picture of her as a saxophone player.

He didn't want to. He wanted to go on playing ostrich, but that afternoon the telephone rang while Jennie was dimple deep in the file cabinet. Dan picked up the receiver.

"Listen," a man's voice said, "you got to do something about that girl who don't sing loud enough to a man can hear her. I work in a printing shop, see? We got all these machines going. We took a vote and the boss won't do nothing about our keeping that programme on, but it's driving us nuts. We can't hear her."

There was a pause. "Is she married?" the man said.

"She's eighty," Dan said. "Frail." He hung up.

When he had Jennie's attention, "There will be no stars," he began, but he had avoided looking at her for days, and now that he did he was a willow wand again.

He attached himself to his desk with both hands. "How much singing do you do on Ad Lib?"

"Who, me?" she said. "I don't sing. I hum."

"You hum. You can sing, I suppose?"

"No. That's why I hum. That's all the voice I have, a hum."

"You can't sing, but you have a hum, so a man calls up and says he wants to marry you."

"He does? Did you take his number?"

"This is not a marriage bureau," Dan said.

"I know, and that's too bad, isn't it?" Because I'd love to get married. That's all I really want. Except children, of course. Six."

She sat there with her hands folded quietly in her lap, with her bright eyes meekly attentive, with nothing reprehensible in her demeanor. And the office pulsed with her.

"Jack says you've had audience response."

"Mostly complaints."

"Ha!" Dan said.

"So what? Some people don't know they're alive until they're annoyed."

"What are they complaining about?"

"About me. I don't sing loud enough."

Dan stood up.

"I'll monitor," he said. "To-morrow. Please go away. Go clear away." But her essence remained, befogging him until he left the station late that night.

Some of it crept into his apartment with him. He sat down, and an hour later, when he got up again, he found himself still wearing his hat and coat.

If this is love, he thought, people have been wrong about it. This is not fun.

At his age, one didn't fall into the error of wooing a gremlin. How would a Jennie Powell look in this flat, for instance?

A man in his position, emerging from the scramble of tough professional beginnings, needed background. He had no time for clutter, for whimsey, for Jennie Powells.

He entered Jack's booth the next morning and sat down in a chair facing the glass window which looked out on Studio B. He folded his arms.

Beyond the window a handful of station employees were milling around the microphones, happy as kids at a party. Carrie was there with her saxophone——

"No stars," Dan muttered—and one of the switchboard operators was larruping the piano with giddy fingers. Jennie Powell was in the group, and as Dan watched, the studio door opened and an office boy entered carrying a duck under his arm.

"That's Ad Nauseam, Ad Lib's sponsor." Jack returned to the panel. "We're on in one minute."

"Someone should tell our artists."

"They know. Nobody has to tell them nothing. They're radio people, too, aren't they? They know what makes it click. I do the announcing."

He flipped a switch and identified the station, "Ad Lib brings you people." Cutting himself off the air again, he turned back to Dan. "We're on."

Larry Donovan, one of Carrie Surrey's publicity staff, was M.C., and the minute he said, "I guess we're on the air. Who has an idea this morning?" the programme struck a meandering beat as casual as a stroll through the woods with a friend.

Somebody said the matter of arranging a marriage for Ad Nauseam should be rediscussed. New angles had appeared.

An old hen south of town wanted his autograph, but warned him marriage wasn't all duck soup. The FBI wanted his fingerprints, suspected him of padding his nest.

No one directed the repartee. It was spontaneous, unrehearsed, zany. Sometimes voices overrode each other, everybody talked at once, a girl with a violin took two minutes to tune it, and presently began to play.

The music came through Jack's loud-speaker, a pensive obbligato that no one troubled to explain.

Ad Nauseam was called on for a few words, which, interpreted by the office boy, resolved themselves into a command that Jennie Powell sing to soothe his ruffled feathers. Jack, stooping, gave Dan a jarring elbow in the ribs.

"She always stands over there near the wall, behind the piano, see? I got a hidden mike rigged on her, and she's going to get pre-amplified, but good, only she don't know it."

The piano accompanied her, but after the

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Jennie was in his arms before he knew what was happening. "Kiss her," said Ben.

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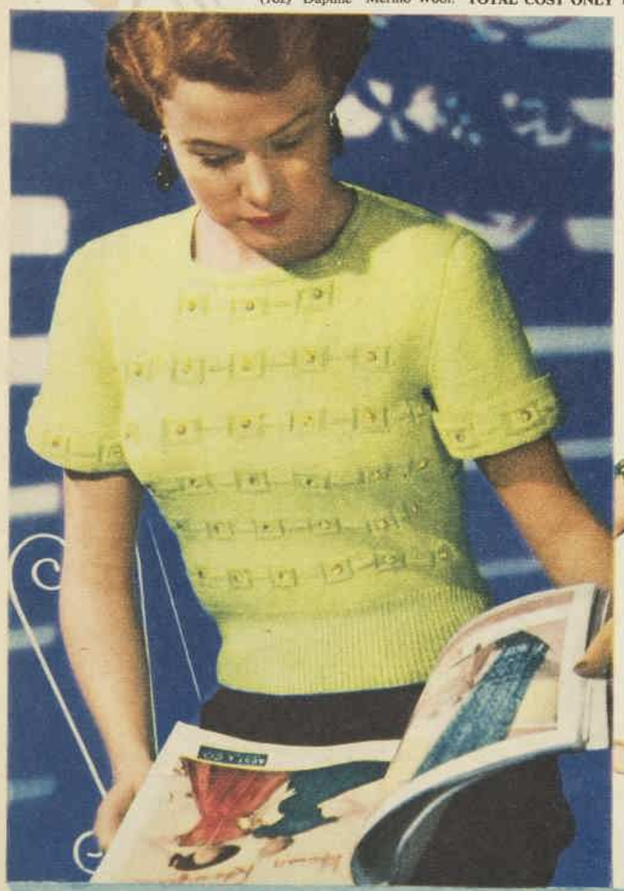

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It's a date

A short story complete on this page

By BETHEL LAURENCE

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THE trap was set! She had managed to get her father out of the way so that we were alone in the house, as usual. Four mild little sixty-watt bulbs had kept dazzling her with their brilliance until she had worked down to one inoffensive forty-watter in the farthest corner of the room, throwing just enough light to keep reminding her how pretty she was.

As well as that, she had edged me nearly to the end of the sofa and was sitting there with much more of her spreading on to my cushion than there was on her own. Finally she leaned across and tucked her head into the curve of my neck. "I know you love me, Jack," she said. "I'm only waiting for you to know it too."

"Listen, Susie," I began. "How many times do I have to tell you? You're a nice girl. I like you. I like everything about you but this strong-arming me into love. It won't work."

She sighed deeply and heavily, as though her heart were a weight she was trying to press. "I don't know why you fight it so, Jack," she said, "when you know it's what we both really want."

"I just don't happen to be in love with you." I moved up to the arm of the sofa. "And I don't happen to want to marry you at this moment, or any other, so——"

She moved up with me. "Jack, Nora Petty couldn't get Bob to propose to her until she went up to the Lake District and then he realised how much he missed her and so he did."

"And now," I said in disgust, "I suppose you are going to the Lake District, too?"

"That's right. How did you know?"

"Oh, for . . .!" I jumped up and walked away. "Listen, Susie—you can go to the Lakes and to the other side of the world if you want to, but remember this—as far as you and I are concerned, we're going to stay exactly where we are without any alterations!"

She smiled smugly. Her whole attitude was one of complacency.

"Go on!" I yelled at her. "If you want a change of scenery and to see how many different hotels you can stay in, go ahead! But I'm warning you——"

"Daddy's getting my ticket to-morrow."

"—that as far as I'm concerned you might as well save your money!" I was clamping on my hat. "Put it into stocks and shares! Buy the Albert Hall! Speculate on oil! Any one of them is a better investment!"

"I go by train," she replied.

"Go by bicycle," I yelled.

She went by train.

She was gone for three weeks. When she came back she was the color of a new penny and with the same sort of a shine. I hated to have to dull it down for her by telling her that her plan hadn't worked.

But it was the truth; I had hardly missed her at all.

"Look, Susie," I was all prepared to say to her, "I feel fine . . . Nothing happened. So let this be an end to it. Let's not have any more of this 'what we both really want out of life' stuff. Let's——"

But she didn't ask. "Oh, Jack, darling, I had the most wonderful time," was all she kept saying. "I met all sorts of people. From nearly every northern county and———"

The phone began to ring. I answered it. It was from some town in Northumberland—and then a man's voice saying, "Susie?" I called her to the phone.

There was quite a lot of conversation, mostly repetitious. How are yous? I'm fines. Blah-blahs.

When she finished she looked very elated. I guessed that she was dying for me to ask which new conquest this might be, so I purposely didn't ask her anything about it.

By our fourth date it was beginning to get monotonous. Durham, Cumberland, Northumberland, Westmorland, and another county. The last was unidentified because Susie beat me to the phone. She gave them all the same routine—the sweet, intimate, butter-in-mouth routine. I was so disgusted I almost gave up taking her out, but I had nothing much else to do.

Then one night I was walking round the room, listening to Susie laughing into the phone, when: "Why, I'd love to," she said, "but I don't know if I can get away."

I stopped walking.

"Well, which week-end?" she asked.

I straightened my tie in the mirror and I noticed that my face was getting red.

"I've never been to Scotland," she said. "It would be wonderful to be with you."

All sorts of strange sensations kept running through my body, and I kept biting my nails and wanting to smash the telephone.

"All right," she said, "it's a date, next Friday. I'll——"

I started shaking my head violently. "No," I hissed to her "No."

She looked up, startled.

"You're not going!" I ran towards her and tried to grab the telephone. She dropped it on the floor. A man's voice kept yelling "Hallo, hallo," from under the chair.

"Ring off," I told her.

"Well, I like that!" She was scrambling on the floor, looking for the telephone. "Of all the . . . Hold on," she screamed towards the receiver. "You've got a lot of—what right have you . . .?"

"I've got every right in the world!" I dropped to the floor to help her. "I've got the right of your . . ." The man's voice was yelling, "Hallo" up my trouser leg—"your . . ."

She stopped reaching for the phone.

"—your intended, that's who!"

She grabbed the telephone. "Intended what?" she said. "Intended to eat my heart out for the rest of my life? Intended to——"

"You know perfectly well what I mean. Intended to——"

"Listen," she hissed into the mouthpiece from a sitting position. "I must go now. Something's just come up!" She looked at me, giant-eyed.

"—to marry you; that's what I mean!"

"Oh, darling," she cried. "I knew you'd see it my way!"

I picked her and the phone up and put them both in their proper places. My arms—telephone table—in just that sequence.

"You ought to be ashamed arranging to meet that fellow," I said. "Wait till your father finds out about this."

"Father," she cried, in between raining kisses on my not unwilling lips. "Oh, darling, won't he be thrilled when he hears about us?"

"By the way," I said, "now that you've pulled off this little deal, tell me. Where is your father? How do you manage to keep the poor old man hidden away in this house so much of the time?"

"Oh, him?" she said, her eyes all innocence. "Didn't I tell you? Father's been travelling on the road for the past few months. He's got the whole of the northern counties now."

"Whole of the northern . . ." I began, struggling through that transition period between blackest night and dawn. "C-counties? Home of—Durham? Cumberland? Northumberland?"

"That's right," she said. "I wish it had happened sooner, though, so we could have told him about it on the phone to-night. But I expect," she sighed, "it'll keep till the next time he rings up."

I shook my head dazedly for a second, and then I just leaned over and kissed her as though I couldn't get enough of her.

Oh, well, I was thinking to myself, it's pretty wonderful to have a wife who knows how to get what we both really want.

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"Intended what?" said Susie, holding the receiver from which a man's voice kept saying, "Hallo."

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The Secret of the Purple Reefs

FOR the tiny islands of the West Indies where the great shipping lines do not touch, the greatest disaster apart from destruction by hurricane can be the loss of a ship.

Without a ship there is no transport for the little exports of lace or for the palm hats so marvellously patterned that they may take a week to weave. Orange and purple mangoes rot beneath the trees. Copra is attacked by beetles.

The people, who in prosperous times make purchases of half a cup of sugar or a needleful of thread or an ounce of coffee, can no longer buy from the stores. And if another ship cannot be bought, the people grow ragged and hungry.

To Home Island in the Western Caribbean disaster had come with the disappearance of the Christophe; a loss less heralded than the more famous mysteries of the seas, yet perhaps of them all the strangest.

For in radiant weather the beautifully built, two-hundred-and-fifty-ton motorship had sailed from Main Town on Home Island on a routine voyage for Tampa via the Isle of Palms, and she had never completed the voyage.

The loss of the ship in peace and in perfect calm had constituted a seeming impossibility for which the insurers had refused to pay, charging attempted fraud on the part of owners and crew.

Yet it was because the Home Islanders do not lie and make no written agreements that the ship had been insured as she was, orally and against only specific risks, it having been the island custom to place all marine underwriting by word of mouth with Monsieur Chabrunn and his sons, wealthy merchants of the Windwards.

The Chabrunns were men of high honor but strict dealing who would pay instantly when convinced that they were liable, but only when so convinced. And thus positive proof of the ship's fate was needed before the insurance could be collected.

But at the end of two years of search begun by the navies, coastguards, and air forces of five nations and continued by the fierce loyalty of lonely peoples, the ship's loss was as utterly mysterious as on the day she had vanished.

For solution of the mystery and of the island's financial tragedy the people looked to the Christophes. For had not Home Island come to them as a trust from the Great Marquis?

That young nobleman of France in 1790 had taken up arms for the slave, bought Home Island to set its people free—with instructions that they learn and speak English—and then, renouncing his French citizenship and his title, had chosen Christophe as the family name and left the island "physically and spiritually" in the care of his descendants.

His grandson, later, had divided the island among the islanders and founded the gentle sect of the Followers, who turned the other cheek as resolutely as the Marquis had drawn the sword.

Always the Christophe sons had been handsomer and the Christophe daughters more beautiful, though each sunburned generation had held less of the world's goods, while the clan had formed a laughing and harmonious whole, a little pool of remarkable happiness in a largely sad world. And in a century and a half no Christophe had ever failed the island.

Christophe duty to the island was in the present case doubly clear because the Christophes had owned the lost ship and, while almost bankrupted by the loss, were morally obligated to provide the island with a new ship.

Henri Henri Christophe and Joseph Henri Christophe, great and bronzed French West Indians and threadbare if honored sons of the Followers, were the last of the Christophe men.

Now as they walked gravely, carrying the stretcher of the crippled Aunt Caroline Christophe behind the coffin of their father, old Captain Henri Christophe, to the cemetery under the sea-grape trees, the tangible weight of the island almost seemed upon their wide and young shoulders.

For they must prove what had befallen the lost ship or betray the island.

The proving would be more difficult because they had been pearl fishing in the Pacific at the time of the disaster. Communications in the French Pacific are slow, and when at last they reached home almost twenty-five months had passed since the Christophe had sailed on her final voyage.

They had found their father dying.

Henri would have liked to be carrying the coffin helped only by his brother, but Joseph had said no, because six of the old captains had wished to act as pall-bearers.

So now the coffin tottered slowly between the greybeards in their blue serge suits. But Henri knew that, as usual, Joseph had been right and that this was as their father would have wanted it.

BEHIND the brothers with Aunt Caroline, who was complaining on her stretcher but greatly enjoying herself, came the population of the island: His honor the commissioner, perspiring in his full-dress uniform of blue and gold with cocked hat; the spade-bearded Follower elders and the grey-clad women of the sect; the Negroes, led by giant Black Tobias; the lepers, to whom a kindly message had been rushed, walking a little apart.

"Look where you're going!" Aunt Caroline shrilled.

"We are looking, Aunt Caroline," the brothers answered dutifully.

"Well, look somewhere else! You're shaking my liver."

"Forgive us, Aunt Caroline," Joseph said.

The procession turned from the blindingly white road into the dappled shadows of the cemetery that was a very friendly place.

For until recently it had been the island custom to bury the dead at the cottage doors, planting the brightest flowers above them, but when the government had forbidden this the people had adopted the cemetery as the place of community singing and the stately meetings of the Followers.

Henri and Joseph had dug the grave last night with a fine view of the brilliant harbor. And now the lowering of the coffin was more than Henri could bear. He knew that, as with all things done for the dead, it was not enough. The most remotely adequate service to his father would be the seemingly impossible service of proving what had befallen the ship.

As the eulogies began, he was fearful that he might weep publicly, for almost every speaker thanked God that Henri and Joseph had returned to find the ship.

As the deep sound of the last amen died to the soft murmur of the departing crowd, both Henri and Joseph knelt, touching their fingers to the sand.

"We cannot promise that we will find the ship or learn of the ship, but if we fail, it will not be because we have ceased to try!" Henri said.

"Two things we have that the navies, coastguards, and air forces of the nations had not," Joseph said when they had carried Aunt Caroline the eight miles back to West Town and the plantation of Demremy and turned their steps to the thorn forest. "Our promise to our father and such knowledge of the Caribbean as only men who were boys in it may have."

"Above all, we must learn what beliefs," Henri said. "If we question not only those who should know of the Christophe but all men everywhere whom we may meet, we may learn something that our father did not learn. Meantime, Black Tobias can tell us what is known of the last voyage."

For the island's uninhabited windward shore belonged to the trade winds, the silver thatch palms, the sea birds, and Tobias, whose shack stood on piles in the Great Sound that Henri used to think was the loneliest place in the world.

It was to see Tobias at first-star time that the brothers now traversed the path through the thorn forest whose matted crazy puzzle had withstood the hurricanes of centuries.

Striding through the miles of the thick thorn forest, the brothers could not even hear their own footfalls. Then a path led them among the mangroves of the sound's edge. And at the end of the path, Tobias' calling conch hung on a branch.

Henri raised the shell to his lips and blew piercingly. Ten minutes later Tobias' dinghy slid suddenly to their feet from a narrow channel. The great black man did not speak, but stood haughtily, the long sculling oar upright beside him, his patched blue dungaree trousers showing pale against the darkness of his gleaming skin.

"You were a good friend to our father, Tobias," Henri said. "We seek your aid in his name."

"For Cap' Christophe it is ended, the long search," Tobias said. "With Cap' Christophe dead, who will see that the search is not ended?"

"Only for our father it is ended," Joseph said.

"Two years late, you and M'sieur Henri will not search!" The words were an accusation that Henri and Joseph would have resented, except that Tobias' only son, a great, gleaming black lad, had been lost with the Christophe.

Henri said gently, "We will search—two years late through no fault of ours, Tobias."

Tobias stood with the immobile majesty

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DOROTHY COTTRELL

ILLUSTRATED BY BECK

black king of Africa, but his eyes changed as if
had suddenly lighted a dark mangrove pool.

"Welcome then to my house!" he said in a different
"We will have oysters, as we did when you,
Joseph, and my son were high as my belt.
body must be strong for search, though the heart
..."

His deep voice shook rumblingly: "For the loss of
ship, it was not as the underwriting men said,
ping that the men of the ship stole the ship away!
was it that the ship met normal disaster of the
Had she, my boy would have reached the shores!
swam as other men walk, as far as he had need
. . . But I will show my thought when we've
..."

With the brothers aboard, he worked the boat along
tidy tunnel, under a final swish of branches. And
suddenly all the space of the world seemed about them.
Beyond the far lines of the seaward reefs, whose single
passage the galleons had threated to careen, the night
was coming up in lilac dusk.

Not looking directly down, Henri glimpsed through
the sky-shine the bottle-green world of the turtle-grass
meadows and the great red starfish like satanic flowers.

Then, where Tobias' shack perched on its piles half
mile from shore, the brothers climbed behind him
the pier that extended from the seaward side of
building to a squared rock platform topped by a
metal pit glowing with thin flames.

Tobias took three well-washed oyster branches—
foot-long sections of mangrove root to which the
small, sweet oysters were clustered to the thickness
a man's arm—and laid them side by side across
the coals. Over them, he threw a blanket of wet
sea grass, and in a moment bursts and bubbles of
and savory steam were rising in the still-crimsoning
dusk.

As the oysters cooked, Tobias cut mangrove forks
and handed Henri and Joseph small, tough-crusted
loaves of potato bread and wooden bowls of coconut
water and smaller bowls of sea salt and freshly ground
pepper. Then he raked back the seaweed and each
took an oyster branch, on which the shells were

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"I owe a great debt to the house of Christophe," Daphne told the assembled gathering simply.

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The Secret of the Purple Reefs

now open, revealing the oysters, curl-edged, juicy, and plump.

They forked the oysters from the china-like interiors of the shells, dipped the exquisite mouthfuls in coconut butter and sprinkled them with salt and pepper, then ate them with a scrap of potato bread.

When the oysters were finished, Tobias brought pint fruit cans and filled them with black Jamaican coffee sweetened with honey.

As they drank, Joseph said, "We have been absent so long that while we know the outline of what befell, there is much in regard to the ship's last days that we do not know. All was well, was it not, at her last careening?"

"She was sound as on the day of her building," Tobias said rumblingly. "What befell was no fault of the ship, or of the engines, or of the men upon her! On her last journey, she came in on time as ever from Jamaica. On time she sailed for the Isle of Palms."

"She reached the Isle of Palms in safety?"

"She reached the Isle of Palms," Tobias said, but there was a darkness in his eyes. "For the rest, a hurricane had passed along the course a week before, but even the swell was gone. Perfect—purely perfect the weather was, as is weather after hurricane."

Joseph spoke with troubled slowness: "There are many things that can befall a little ship—waterspout, collision with a derelict, fire."

Tobias said, "There were fifteen people upon that little ship, and eight were islanders. There were good lifebelts and good lifeboats. If island men had but a plank or their own arms to swim, they would have reached the land. If there were fire, they would have put it out. Or if by miracle they could not put it out, they would have launched the lifeboats."

He stirred the shimmering fire. "Of greater meaning, no ship sinks without a trace! Let there be explosion, there are fragments and there is oil. Let there be collision, there is oil—and many things that do not sink. Let there be fire, and there is charcoal and the trace of ash—and still the oil." He raised fierce eyes to stare at them.

"Your father, Cap' Christophe, offered high reward for any trace of wreckage—for any smallest thing that could be proved the Christophe's. But nothing was found—no board, no lifebelt, no little stick of wood!"

Leaning forward, Henri asked, "With the Christophe herself, was anything — any smallest thing—different from all other voyages?"

Tobias looked at him gravely. "One thing was different! She was two days late at the Isle of Palms!"

"A small delay could have been engine trouble," Joseph said.

"There was naught amiss with the good engines," Tobias said. "Naught was ever amiss with the good engines tended by my son! An engineer who came once told me that my son had the genius of machinery. It was strange to me to look at the kind and wise hands of my son and think, 'They are still the young hands of a black man!' " He raised his glance from the fire.

"As explanation of the delay, two white men passengers who had taken passage with the Christophe from Home Island to the Isle of Palms—a large and fair man, M'sieur Webber, and a small and dark man with a great chest, M'sieur Ashby—said that Cap' Malcolm had

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delayed to seek survivors of the wrecked steamer that the hurricane had thrown upon the Purple Reefs. But one may not know if men from the world speak truth."

Suppressing a smile at Tobias' doubt of men from the world, Henri asked, "The Christophe herself stood off the Isle of Palms?" He knew that such a course had been in no way unusual.

"That is truth. Cap' Malcolm held no contract at the Isle of Palms for outgoing mail—that going by faster ships via Miami or Tampa. The Christophe was late and the hour was dark. The passengers, M'sieur Webber and M'sieur Ashby, had with them the powerboat in which they had reached Home Island. Thus Cap' Malcolm swung them off in the powerboat and they took in the mails as they went ashore.

"The men of the port watched the Christophe's lights pass onward and reported her sailing to the keepers of the lighthouse on the cape. But she never passed the light. Somewhere in that hundred and forty miles, unless Cap' Malcolm for unknown reason went seaward, she was within sight of land, she was among the snapper cutters and the sponge boats and the little craft of the coasts. Yet after the Isle of Palms none saw the ship."

AFTER a silence, Henri said, "There have in the world been meteorites that blasted all things where they struck. It is barely possible——"

"Many men turned to the thought of meteorites that might turn a ship to nothing," Tobias said. "But the chance that a ship be so stricken is one in many million billions. I asked the men of science from the museum. Also the Caribbean is filled with the eyes of helmsmen watching the tall skies. None saw even a shooting star!" His voice rumbled ominously.

"Men say that this has no connection with the Christophe," he went on, "since the Christophe and Jacques and Christian were a sea apart. But Jacques and Christian, of Home Island, went to sponge-hook off Gracias a Dios three weeks before the Christophe sailed, and they did not return. And men say they were overtaken by hurricane.

"But Jacques and Christian were men of wisdom in the ways of storms. The Christophe did not return—and men speak of meteorites. But neither hurricanes nor meteorites take account of the two unaccounted days on the Christophe's last journey to the Isle of Palms!"

Joseph said gently, "What is your thought for those two days, Tobias?"

"It is my thought that in them something befell that never befell before, and could we know its nature, we would also know what befell the ship! That which befell the Christophe was stranger than the Caribbean — though it is the strangest of the seas!"

Neither brother challenged this as they considered it. For true, the Caribbean's very history was written in disaster and death, violence and cruelty, and though the gentlest, it was also the most savage of the seas. And from it great fleets had sailed in pomp to be seen no more.

But if, at the end of so much mystery and loss, the loss of an island motorship was perhaps a small thing, it was still the least explicable.

Before them at the end stood two possibilities, equally improbable—some quite unknown and unimaginable catastrophe of nature or some equally unimaginable act of man. And an act of man, for what purpose?

For what unimagined purpose could a busy and inoffensive little ship have become of such value or menace to men that they would cause her to vanish without trace? And by what men?

Certainly not to the men who worked her. No reward would induce men of the islands to cut themselves off from their islands. No inducement of this would have taken grave Malcolm Christophe from Dayton, his young wife, nor any Christophe from Domremy.

Tobias stirred the coals round and round and the red-gold light beat upon his face. He rose suddenly to his magnificent height, standing with folded arms as he gazed at his brothers.

"You may laugh, saying 'Tobias is stranged!' But is not truth when men say the ship reached the Isle of Palms in safety! The evil was on her then! It had boarded her on the Purple Reefs — from the White Dunes of the Purple Reefs! It is there still!

"I have seen it as I see the fire; I have touched it as I touch this staff! Footsteps upon the dunes, I saw and touched. Fresh footsteps where there were no men—and with the footsteps of a giant! Two I saw—once four months after the losing of the Christophe, once three weeks ago!"

Joseph felt a sharp and terrible shock of pity. After a moment he said gently, "Your father did not see this!"

"He did not see it, because we sought separately, each in our own boat, meeting at places named," Tobias said. "Though he did not believe, when I saw them, Cap' Christophe went with me. But a great tide had washed all away. Three weeks ago there were the signs again, but I was alone—for Cap' Christophe was dying."

Henri said, "We thank you for telling us, Tobias."

"I will not tell of it again," Tobias said softly. "And you do not believe it and M'sieur Joseph does not believe. But there was that in the Christophe's losing that was not of wind or sea or the common fate of ships. Evil touched the Christophe in the two days she went with her. Evil out of the sea, taking good men, taking my son. But if it were of men, some day I will find the men."

. . . . .

Blue-white fire of lightning was turning the upper leaves of the thorns to the semblance of silver flowers as Henri and Joseph started for home.

"Poor Tobias," Joseph said as they passed from the thorns into the true jungle. "He does not say it, but he plainly thinks the same evil that befell the Christophe took our sponge fishers Jacques and Christian, though they were a sea away."

"Two men in a cockleshell are vulnerable as a ship is not. Yet they were very experienced men," Henri said, puzzled.

Popeyed, pale blue land crabs scuttled ghostlike in the torchlight before them.

"If we are to have hope of learning what befell, we must keep in mind that there may be simple explanation," Joseph said, stepping round a clattering twelve-inch crab, "that it only seems so strange because we do not know."

They plunged into a mystically falling wall of warm rain where the jungle gave place to the plantations of the village of West Town.

Alone, Tobias loaded his seagoing catboat and considered the problem of his own possible strangedness. But after weighing

To page 36

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AT ALL CHEMISTS

MAIDS OF HONOR

LADY MARY BAILLIE-HAMILTON (left), a 1951 debutante and daughter of the Earl of Haddington, who will be one of the Queen's maids of honor at her Coronation on June 2.

LADY ROSEMARY SPENCER-CHURCHILL, daughter of the Duke of Marlborough, also one of the Queen's maids of honor, who said the maids would "train like Guardsmen."

Daughters of six noble families will carry the Sovereign's train

By
ANNE MATHESON, of our London staff

The six lovely young girls chosen by the Queen as maids of honor at her Coronation belong to some of Britain's most distinguished families.

All are close personal friends of the Queen and they will spend the weeks until the Coronation rehearsing the roles of trainbearers to Her Majesty.

"WE are deeply honored," Lady Mary Baillie-Hamilton told me, "and we are anxious that nothing we do will mar the splendor and dignity of the Queen's crowning."

In having maids of honor the Queen is following the example of her great-great-grandmother, Queen Victoria, except that she will have six instead of eight maids to bear her train.

"And our Coronation robes will be unrelieved with color," the maids of honor told me.

"Queen Victoria's attendants had pink roses in their hair and on their robes."

The Queen's maids of honor are Lady Rosemary Spencer-Churchill, daughter of the Duke of Marlborough; Lady Moyra Hamilton, daughter of the Marquess of Hamilton; Lady Mary Baillie-Hamilton, daughter of the Earl of Haddington; Lady Anne Coke, daughter of the Earl of Leicester; Lady Jane Heathcote-Drummond-Willoughby, daughter of the Earl of Ancaster; and Lady Jane Vane-Tempest-Stewart, daughter of the Marquess of Londonderry.

A complete break of tradition is that in choosing her maids the Queen has not allowed their respective heights to influence her. The trainbearers have always been of uniform height, but the Queen's attendants vary from 5ft. 3in. to 5ft. 11in. The tallest is Lady Moyra Hamilton.

Jewelled gowns

RICH brocade in white with touches of silver is being specially woven for the maids of honor. The material is embroidered in a light jewel tracing.

The gowns, which are being made by Norman Hartnell, will be cut on slim lines.

Meantime, as the Coronation preparations sweep forward, deportment lessons and rehearsals at Buckingham Palace are scheduled.

The Queen herself will tutor her maids of honor for their exacting role.

"None of us has had the rigorous training of the Queen," one of them told me, "so that the Coronation will be something of an ordeal.

"But if practice and rehearsal can make perfect, then we will be as near that as is possible."

The Queen remembers, no doubt, the many rehearsals she had as a girl and her parents' rehearsals before her father's Coronation, with tablecloths for Coronation robes pinned to their shoulders.

"We will train as rigorously as Guardsmen," said Lady Rosemary Spencer-Churchill, five-foot-ten sister of the Marquess of Blandford, and a great personal friend of Princess Margaret.

Lady Rosemary announced her engagement to Mr. Robin Muir, 20-year-old London stockbroker, the day before her appointment was announced officially.

"But we all knew about a month before," said Lady Rosemary.

Lady Rosemary is the only one of the six maids who is engaged.

"We will marry shortly after the Coronation," she said. "Not before, of course."

Ancient custom

MAIDS of honor are traditionally unmarried. Formerly they were the daughters of dukes, marquesses, or earls who were summoned to Court by the reigning monarch and lived there rather like daughters of the house.

The duties of the maids of honor of Queen Elizabeth II will end with the Coronation.

One of the six maids of honor is Lady Anne Coke, daughter of the Earl and Countess of Leicester. Lady Leicester is one of the Ladies-of-the-Bedchamber.

On Coronation Day there will be three members of the family in the Abbey, for the Earl of Leicester told me that he, too, has been lucky enough to draw a seat in the peers' ballot.

Lady Anne, who is twenty, is probably the most energetic and practical of the six maids, for, with her mother, she is helping to earn dollars by making pottery at their 18th-century home, Holkham Hall, in Norfolk.

Leicester pottery

"I WAS on my way home from a business trip to America when my appointment was announced," Lady Anne told me, as she stepped off the boat train from the liner bound Queen Mary, which had been lying off Southampton for days.

The golden-haired, youthful Countess and her family turned the laundry at their home into a pottery, with three electrically fired kilns.

"There is still a demand for our pottery," Lady Anne said.

"All the family help with the turning and firing," she told me.

The Earl and Countess are neighbors of the Royal Family at Sandringham. It was at Holkham Hall that the last

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To serve the Queen

LADY ANNE COKE, daughter of the Earl and Countess of Leicester. The Countess is a Lady-of-the-Bedchamber to the Queen, and will herself be present in the Abbey for the Coronation.

LADY JANE VANE-TEMPEST-STEWART, daughter of the Marquess of Londonderry, who will be 21 this year, one of the maids of honor and a close friend of Princess Margaret.

King and the Queen Mother met at a young people's dance.

The present Earl is a godson of King Edward VII, and was an extra equerry to King George VI.

Lady Anne's coming-out dance was attended by King George VI, the Queen Mother, and Princess Margaret.

Royal guests

BEFORE she takes any lessons in deportment or rehearsals for the onerous duties of Coronation Day, Lady Mary Baillie-Hamilton, 18-year-old, dark-haired daughter of the Earl and Countess of Haddington, has gone off on a Continental tour, returning at Easter.

Lady Mary had a magnificent coming-out ball at famous Syon House, Brentford, in 1951. The Queen, the Queen Mother, and Princess Margaret were all there.

Lady Jane Vane-Tempest-Stewart, eldest daughter of Lord Londonderry, was skiing in Austria when her appointment was confirmed, and she hurried home for fittings and consultations at the Palace. She is another friend of Princess Margaret's.

This year Lady Jane will be 21 and will inherit a share of the £13,525 left by Lady Londonderry to her two daughters when she died in 1951.

Another maid of honor who, as a debutante, had a Royal guest at her coming-out dance was 18-year-old Lady Jane Heathcote-Drummond-Willoughby, daughter of the Earl of Ancaster, and a granddaughter of the famous Nancy, Lady Astor.

Princess Margaret went to Lady Jane's dance at Cliveden last year.

Lady Jane has inherited something of her grandmother's flair for politics, and is at present doing a course in citizenship at Ashridge College at Hemmel Hempstead.

"Until she finishes her studies my daughter will not be in town for fittings or for coaching in ceremonial," her mother, Lady Ancaster, told me, "but the course she is doing should terminate very soon."

Lady Moyra Hamilton lives in the country, but stays with her grandparents, the Duke and Duchess of Abercorn, when in London.

"She is five foot eleven," the Duke said, "and she'll tower over the others. She's a real country girl."

Lady Moyra was at Cheltenham races when her appointment was announced.

Court procedure and ceremonial should not be difficult for Lady Moyra, for two of her aunts are in attendance on members of the Royal family—the Countess Spencer, a Lady-of-the-Bedchamber to the Queen Mother since 1937, and Lady Katharine Seymour, Woman of the Bedchamber to Queen Mary, and from 1937 to Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

Mistress-of-the-Robes

THE only other woman in attendance on the Queen, apart from her maids of honor, on the day of her Coronation will be the Mistress of the Robes, the Duchess of Devonshire, who follows immediately behind the retinue of maids of honor bearing Her Majesty's train.

Appointed Mistress of the Robes, the Duchess, who will serve Royalty for the first time, is the widow of the tenth Duke and a sister of Lord Salisbury.

The diamonds she will wear at the Coronation and the embroideries on her robes will be among the most beautiful seen in the Abbey.

The design will be emblems of her father's and husband's families, intertwined and embroidered on rich velvet furred with ermine.

The Duchess will have a page who will, by tradition, wear the colors of the house of Devonshire. It is almost certain to be her grandson, Peregrine, the nine-year-old Marquess of Hartington, who will carry her train in the Coronation procession.

In bygone days the Mistress of the Robes was something like a headmistress at a school, living at Court, training and supervising the young maids of honor.

Task for Duchess

THE Duchess of Devonshire's responsibility for the six maids of honor to Queen Elizabeth II ends with the Coronation.

As Mistress of the Robes, she is the most important of all ladies in attendance on the Queen, and when the Queen pays her State visits after her crowning the Duchess will be in attendance.

These events will include all the big ceremonial banquets and garden parties at Buckingham Palace throughout the season.

The title Mistress of the Robes is no sinecure.

The Duchess will be responsible for the Coronation robes of the maids who will bear the train, hustling them from last-minute fittings to Abbey rehearsals, until on the day itself she finally marshals them into position in the Abbey, holding the Queen's train.

She will then take up her own position immediately behind them.

Coronation Contest

• Judges have almost completed the task of awarding prizes in our popular Coronation Contest, the winner of which will fly to England with a friend or another member of the family for the Coronation festivities.

Results will be announced within a few weeks.

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The Queen has a helpmate

Informality new to Buckingham Palace

By MARGARET SAVILLE

To Buckingham Palace the Duke of Edinburgh, husband of the Queen, has brought his own brand of informality. He is the only man who has ever strolled about its stately private apartments wearing a blue jersey and ancient flannels and eating a stick of barley sugar.

INFORMAL TWEEDS are worn by the Duke of Edinburgh when he takes his little daughter, Princess Anne, for a walk during one of his infrequent spells of leisure.

● In this excerpt from Margaret Saville's book "Our Queen," the author tells how the Duke of Edinburgh helps his wife, the Queen, and endeavors to lighten the burden she carries as head of the realm.

WHEN the Duke is "off duty," as he always calls his leisure, he spends his time in the way he prefers, and certainly his wife and Queen, who regards him with such loving admiration, would not have it otherwise.

Ever since his wife's accession to the Throne the Duke has meekly endeavored to help her and lighten her burden wherever possible.

It was he who first told her she was indeed the Queen. They were on their tour of Africa, spending a few days at the Sagana Royal Lodge, when the telephone message came from Nairobi conveying the news of King George's sudden death.

The Duke, who was called from the hall by a shocked equerry, went back to break the sad news to his wife, and became the first man to bend the knee to her as he called her "Your Majesty."

The Duke quickly began to organise all the details of the hurried return journey to London. Realising how much the Queen was feeling the strain on the sad in the airliner, he took out her cine-camera and suggested she make some pictures of the scenery over which they were passing.

"Philip is always so practical," the Queen so often remarks gratefully.

In the crowded days that followed King George's funeral, the Duke was constantly beside the Queen, conveying her messages, answering her telephone calls, and writing many of her letters.

Arranged move

HE made all the arrangements for the transfer of the Royal home from Clarence House to Buckingham Palace.

Inside the Palace the Duke had everything possible done for the Queen's added comfort and convenience, he himself helping to hang her favorite pictures and place her ornaments and small occasional furniture.

He regularly has conferences with the Master of the Household to see what modernisations and improvements can be made in the Palace.

Some of its hundreds of rooms have frankly startled the Duke because they still retain all the atmosphere of their original decoration nearly 100 years ago. It is part of his long-term personal plan to have them all graciously modernised in due course.

Already the Duke has helped to streamline the domestic work—"like running a battleship" was his characteristic comment.

Much new electrically-operated equipment has been introduced, and the inter-communication system now in force, again on naval lines, saves much time and labor for the staff.

The Duke is tall and leanly built, with clear-cut features and a skin tanned from the regular open-air exercises in which he so firmly believes.

"A regular Viking" is how the Queen Mother once described the Duke, and certainly he has inherited all the fair coloring of his Scandinavian ancestors.

As a cadet the Duke was familiarly known to the other boys as "Whysit" because of his predilection for asking questions and having things explained to him in detail.

His Spartan personal habits always won him much admiration from his fellow pupils at Gordonstoun School, in Scotland, and later at the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth, even though the other boys did not often copy him.

Even to-day the Duke insists on sleeping on a hard bed, with a single, flat pillow, and takes his cold bath every morning, whatever the weather.

He does daily exercises, and regularly plays a hard game of squash on the indoor court at Buckingham Palace, always going on for an energetic swim in the big covered pool down in the basement.

The Queen had the pool specially reopened for her husband, after its years of wartime disuse.

Sometimes, Prince Charles sees his father on the way to the pool, and immediately demands to "Go with Papa, please!" So usually he is changed into his small red-and-white striped bathing suit and goes into the water hand-in-hand with the Duke.

The Duke intends to superintend Prince Charles' swimming lessons, just as he plans to look after many other facets of his son's education personally.

He is well qualified to do this, for he was a naval instructor for several years, and also had charge of the junior cadets' sports and general welfare.

New cricket pitch

THE Duke has had a cricket pitch laid out in the Palace grounds, and Prince Charles will certainly go to watch the household staff playing their future matches here with his father as captain.

The Queen has always been gently amused at the serious way in which the Duke teaches their small son to play ball games in the nursery. "He might as well learn to handle a ball properly at the start," the Duke explains.

It is the Duke, too, who often takes Prince Charles for a visit to the Royal Mews to see the horses, encouraging the child to become acquainted with them so that his own riding lessons will be easier.

The Duke also means to supervise his son's future studies as well as his sports, not only because he considers this a father's duty but because he realises the Queen is so constantly occupied with her official tasks and engagements that she cannot give much attention to the tremendously important matter of training the heir to the Throne.

The Duke's study is on the first floor of the Palace, and is part of the small suite adjacent to the Queen's rooms in the private apartment wing. Previously it was used by the King's wife. The Queen uses the largest suite, designed for the monarch.

So the Duke found himself with light blue boudoir-style decorations and furniture when he moved across from Clarence House.

He soon had this changed, with much of the elaborate gilding stripped off, a plain dark green carpet laid, and his serviceable, flat-topped, white sycamore desk and bureau from Clarence House brought in.

Much to the Duke's regret he cannot have any built-in cupboards made in the private apartments because the beautiful panelled walls are too decorative to be disturbed, so he compromises with large wardrobe cupboards fitted with shelves on which all his papers and magazines are tidily laid out.

His first command

THERE is a large oil painting of H.M.S. Magpie, his first command, over the mantelpiece. Everywhere about the room are framed photographs of naval and sailing subjects, of the Duke and his friends playing polo, of school groups.

At diplomatic gatherings the Duke is never far from the Queen's side, seeing that she meets the people she wishes to meet and that she is not monopolised.

One of the Duke's most attractive attributes is that he is such a good mixer, perfectly at ease with men and women from any walk of life.

Soon after Lieut. Philip Mountbatten became engaged to Princess Elizabeth, he was asked how he felt about his future duties, with all the international publicity that would become a necessary part of his life. He replied, with his celebrated smile: "It's all right with me as long as it does some good."

As the husband of the Queen, the Duke would doubtless make the same answer to-day. He works beside her with affectionate devotion plainly to be seen in a thousand small ways every day.

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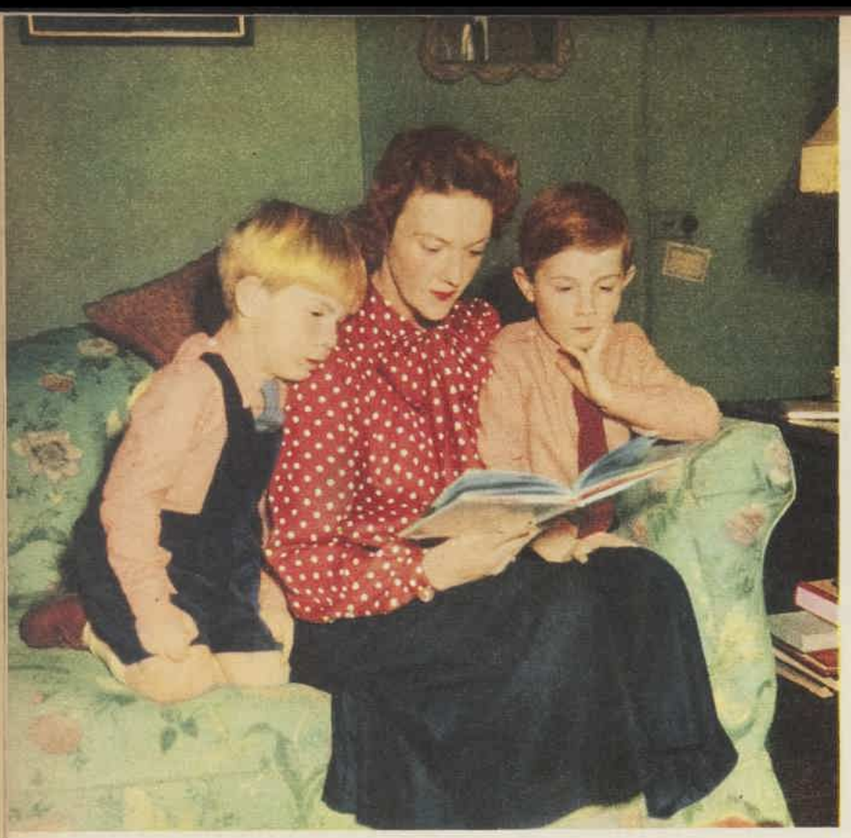


WONDER HORSE FOXHUNTER

By ANNE MATHESON, of our London staff

Lieutenant-Colonel Harry Llewellyn and his wife, the Honorable Christine Llewellyn, say that the only drawback to their trip to Australia is that they have to leave behind Foxhunter, the champion jumper on which Colonel Llewellyn won Britain's only gold medal at the Olympic Games at Helsinki.

Colonel and Mrs. Llewellyn are due to arrive in Sydney next week to judge equestrian events at the Royal Easter Show.

MRS. LLEWELLYN will judge ladies' riding competitions, children's show riding, and three classes for the best-attired lady rider. Colonel Llewellyn will judge one type of hack and all jumping contests.

Colonel Llewellyn will also lecture at the Show and will show a number of films covering the 1948 and 1952 Olympic Games, in which he competed.

But the famous Foxhunter remains at home. Like his owner-rider he has retired from international competitions.

Foxhunter, with Colonel Llewellyn up, has won nearly 50 international trophies in five years. He has become a legend wherever men talk about horses.

He is already in Madame Tussaud's; he has been presented to the Queen, to Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, and to President O'Kelly, of Eire.

Internationally Foxhunter is called "The Horse of the Century."

In France, where they title him "Monseigneur Foxhunter," a famous French horseman, after watching his matchless performance in the ring, described him as "un grand seigneur."

But for all his world renown he is just a family pet to Colonel and Mrs. Llewellyn.

Their two boys, six-year-old David and five-year-old Roddy, sit on his back as he takes a walk round the stables at Gobion Manor, the Llewellyns' home in Monmouthshire.

He is one of the gentlest horses in the world. He loves to be kissed.

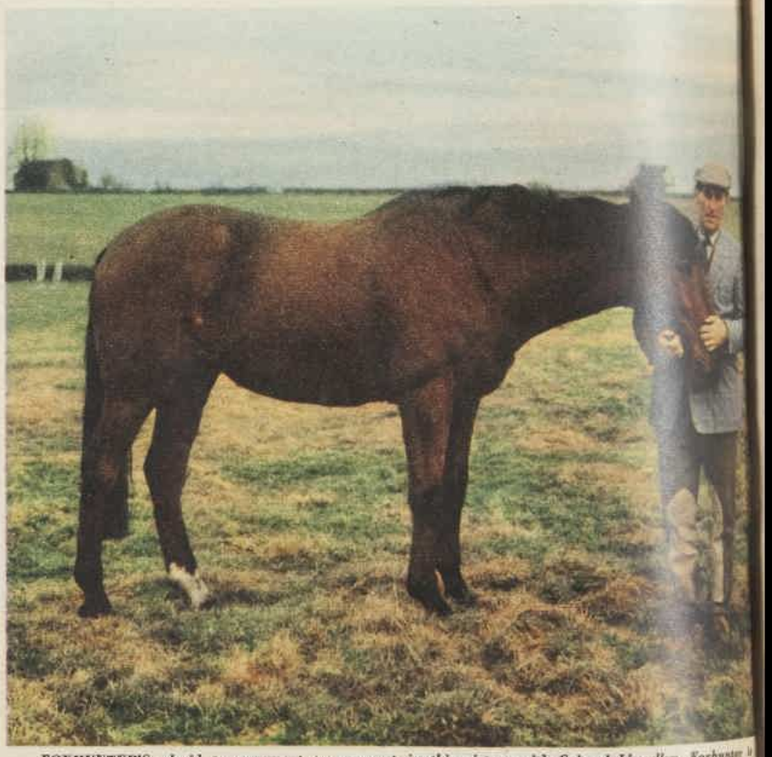
"You can never give Foxhunter too much attention," said Colonel Llewellyn.

"He loves his ears being tickled or his lower lip scratched, and he will close his eyes and sigh sentimentally while you do it.

"If he had been a dog he would have been a Golden Retriever.

THE HON. MRS. LLEWELLYN (above) reads to her sons, Roddy, aged five, and David, aged nearly seven, from the book on Foxhunter written by their father, Colonel Harry Llewellyn.

OWNER-RIDER Colonel Llewellyn tickles the ears of his famous jumper Foxhunter in one of the paddocks at his home in Monmouthshire. Color pictures taken specially for us by Alec Murray.



FOXHUNTER'S placid temperament is apparent in this picture with Colonel Llewellyn. Foxhunter is supremely gentle. He loves children, and has never been known to kick or bite. However, he has to be watched in company because he is expert at removing feathers and fruit used to trim women's hats.

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WINNING JUMP by Foxhunter and Colonel Llewellyn in an event at Madison Square Garden, New York, in 1950. Foxhunter was also a member of the British team which won the Relay at the same show.

"I shouldn't be surprised if one of these days he lies on his back and asks me to scratch his tummy."

Foxhunter was having his after-lunch nap when I was introduced to him by the Colonel. But he stayed lying down. Foxhunter never thinks of getting up for his owner—or for anyone else, for that matter.

We had brought him some sugar. The Colonel tickled his ears, gave him a lump, and we left.

Foxhunter closed his eyes for another forty winks.

As we walked away Colonel Llewellyn told me that he pays a good-night call to Foxhunter every evening after dinner.

"If I'm a little late he just lies there without moving and lets me sit on him and tickle his ears.

"Foxhunter is so remarkably placid that even in a strange box on a foreign showground he will let his mane be plaited for the ring without trying to get up."

After his nap Foxhunter joined the children in a romp in one of the fields.

Foxhunter is particularly gentle with small children, and has never been known to bite or kick.

This placidity, which Foxhunter carries almost to the point of laziness, makes for a splendid competition temperament.

Courageous battler

HE has no "nerves." The noise and stir of the ring stimulate him. In fact, he seems to need the excitement and tension of a big crowd to do his best.

His owner finds him "a most courageous battler, especially when the fences go higher."

"He often larks over anything below 4ft. 3in.," said Colonel Llewellyn in the preface to the book he wrote about Foxhunter.

"Sometimes I know from the high position of his head that he is looking over such a fence at the next one, possibly in the hope that it may prove a more serious test."

Despite his retirement from competitions, Foxhunter has many years of jumping in front of him.

Now nearly 13 years old, this bay gelding is said to be worth more than £50,000, although the Colonel will tell you emphatically that money cannot buy him.

"It would be like selling a member of my family," explained Colonel Llewellyn.

He is three-quarters thoroughbred, one-quarter Clydesdale.

Colonel Llewellyn bought him five years ago and has trained him ever since.

His proudest possessions, according to his owner-rider, are the Bronze Medallion—his first medal—won at the Olympic Games at Wembley in 1948, and the Gold Medal—his last—won at the Olympics at Helsinki.

Harry Llewellyn, a master horseman, has ridden many famous horses, but with Foxhunter he has such understanding that they act in perfect unity in dressage and over the jumps.

They make an amazing team, and are so uncannily sympathetic to each other that grooms have been heard to declare: "They seem to have long conversations."

David and Roddy Llewellyn are remaining behind with Foxhunter while their parents visit Australia.

They will give him the petting he is accustomed to until his "partner" returns.

Thirty-four-year-old Mrs. Llewellyn, now one of Britain's finest horsewomen, was taught to ride by her husband.

Many prizes

SHE holds many international trophies, but says: "I don't think one really learns to ride well unless one starts young."

Mrs. Llewellyn was in the W.R.E.N.S. when she married the dashing Major Llewellyn at St. Margaret's, Westminster, in 1944.

She was the Honorable Christine Saumarez, younger daughter of Lord and Lady Saumarez, of Suffolk and the Channel Islands. Lord de Saumarez' family settled in Guernsey in the eleventh century.

Harry Llewellyn, a deputy-lieutenant of the county of Monmouthshire, is the second son of the late Sir David Llewellyn.

All his life he has been interested in horses and horsemanship.

Before the war he was a regular steeplechase rider, being placed third and fourth in the Grand National in 1936 and 1937 respectively. His mount then was his father's horse Ego.

From 1948 to 1951 he was a steward of the National Hunt Committee.

Colonel Llewellyn, who is now 41, was educated at Oundle School and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he gained a tripos in economics, law, and Spanish, with the degree of M.A.

For a time he worked with the Welsh Associated Collieries, and he bought Rhigos Colliery for himself. In pre-war years he visited Russia, Poland, and Turkey to study mining conditions.

In 1939 he joined the Warwickshire Yeomanry and served in the Middle East. He was mentioned in dispatches while serving with the Eighth Army from El Alamein to Tunis.

He was Senior Liaison Officer to General (now Field-Marshal) Montgomery in Sicily and Italy, and was again mentioned in dispatches. He then returned to England as military assistant to Montgomery's Chief of Staff during the planning period before the Normandy invasion.

For the whole of the North-Western Europe campaign he was Senior Liaison Officer to Montgomery. This work earned him the American Legion of Merit.

In the New Year's Honors List the Queen made him a C.B.E.

IN RIDING KIT. Colonel Llewellyn stands beside a fruit bowl, one of Foxhunter's minor trophies, in the dining-room of the Llewellyns' Elizabethan home, Gobion Manor. From 1948, with Colonel Llewellyn up, Foxhunter has won 50 trophies for individual jumping or as a member of a British team of horses.

COL. AND MRS. LLEWELLYN with some of the horses from their stables. Mrs. Llewellyn, formerly the Honorable Christine Saumarez, a daughter of Lord and Lady Saumarez, is an accomplished horsewoman. She is accompanying her husband to Australia to judge events at the Royal Easter Show, Sydney.

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MOTHER

"Any old rags? Yes, indeed, but we're still wearing them."

BUTCH

"I can see now I shouldn't have said nuthin', but it struck me funny, findin' money in the guy's shoe."

It seems to me

By

Dorothy Drain

THERE'S some feminine indignation over the N.S.W. Surf Life Saving Association's dictum that women should not compete in surf carnivals.

An association spokesman said that women were not strong enough physically, and endangered their lives and those of others by competing in surf and belt races.

This must be disappointing to girl life-savers. All the same, I'm quite glad to hear that some people still think women are not as strong as men.

Men have long since decided that women are quite capable of standing up in trams, a regrettable state of affairs caused by the fight for equal rights.

(At this point friends may remind me that I've said something of the kind before. Very likely. It's one of my pet platforms.)

Women should aim to maintain their dual status: that is, opportunity to do what they like, and privilege (suitcases carried for them and early morning tea in bed) when it suits them.

This is a difficult position to hold, but not impossible, if every attractive debutante works towards it.

It may be necessary to make concessions, such as leaving surf life-saving to men, but, as a confirmed dog-paddler, that doesn't worry me much personally.

★ ★ ★

A NEW American law allows citizens complete tax exemption on money earned outside the country over a period of 18 months.

Actor Gene Kelly, the first film star to benefit under this law, will return to America from Europe with £170,000 tax free.

When this news gets round, ships reaching the Statue of Liberty will hail the New York skyline with a cry of "Anybody home?"

★ ★ ★

FASCINATING results are promised by the invention of a machine for compressing sound, shortening broadcast and recorded programmes.

Devised by scientists at the University of Illinois, U.S.A., it chops words or music into tiny sections, throwing some away, and pushing the rest close together.

It is needless to stress the advantages of this for broadcast speeches. It will also be useful for introducing children to classical music, in a potted form suitable to the jet age.

However, it does not solve the problem of speeches at annual meetings, openings of new wings to buildings, or laying of foundation stones.

Still, once the thing catches on, live speakers will find their audiences so restless that they will be forced to fall into line.

They could use symbolic sounds (as unlike a raspberry as possible) for such sentences as "Ladies and gentlemen, I am very pleased to be here this afternoon" and "The children of to-day are the citizens of to-morrow."

Better still, they could record their speeches and have them minced by a sound compressor before delivery.

THAT old gentleman I mentioned a couple of weeks ago, the one who objected to the encroachment of Americanisms in speech and habits, would be as mad as hops about the proposal to import hula girls for Hayman Island.

His daughters, seeing the item in a Sunday paper, promptly cut it out and hid it, fearing the effect on his blood-pressure.

One appreciates the difficulties of resort managers who think up things like this.

Having seen how skilfully the Americans have combined local color and first-class plumbing in Honolulu, they are naturally envious.

The plumbing can be copied, but the local color is another matter. Coral gardens and tropical fish are pretty, but they lack sex appeal.

I doubt the wisdom of trying to turn the North Queensland islands, which have their own charm, into imitations of Honolulu and Tahiti.

It would be better to strike out on some original line.

Corroborees haven't the same appeal as hulas, but it should be feasible to invent a new dance and call it the Barrier Reef Wriggle. This could be danced by shapely blondes, and the customers could be told that it was adapted from the ceremonial customs of some little known tribe of Cape York Peninsula.

★ ★ ★

DIRECTOR of the Stratford-on-Avon touring company now in New Zealand, Mr. Anthony Quayle, said in Wellington that "Othello" was unsuitable for children under 15 or 16.

"It's a most passionate play filled with murder and suicide, but ennobled by the finest poetry," Mr. Quayle is reported to have said. "If you remove that poetry the play becomes an appalling sex-ridden story."

"Othello" was the first play I ever saw—at the age of nine. Hadn't the least idea why Othello was making such a fearful, murderous fuss, but enjoyed it all enormously.

Most children don't spend much time brooding on what they don't understand. If they did, parents would have to restrict their reading to L. M. Montgomery and the Biggles books.

★ ★ ★

"AH, very amusing!" the French audience is reported to have cried when shown some of the latest creations of Paris dress designers' brains, including de Givenchy's "back-to-front" dress.

May one keep a waistline?
Dare one risk a middy?
Problems that she's faced with
Make a girl feel giddy.

Fashion's so confusing,
Furthermore, costs money.
Should one look amusing?
Might one just look funny?

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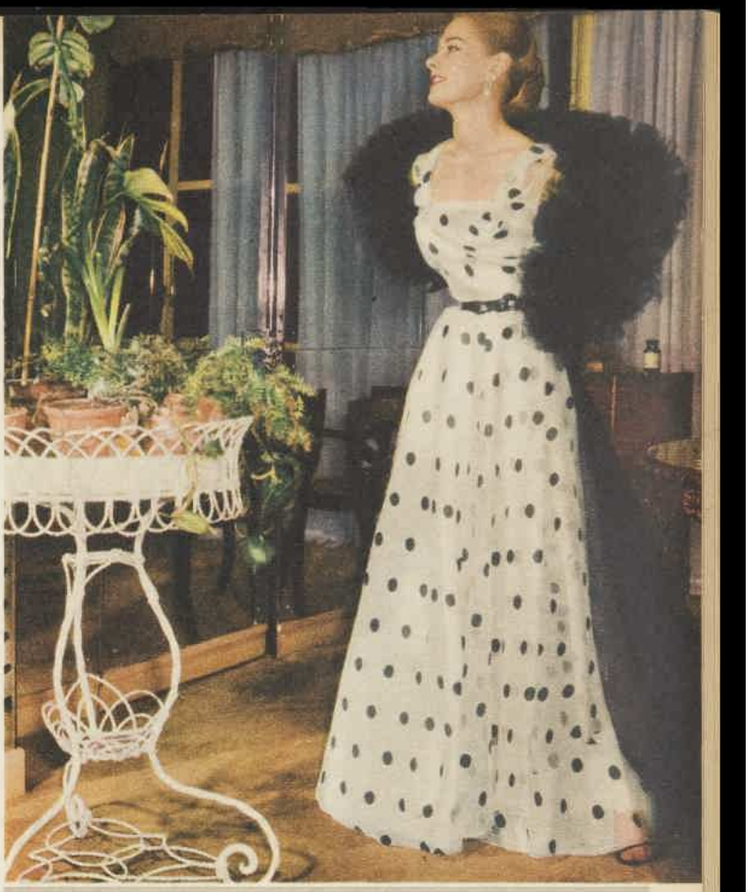
FOR THE LONDON SEASON

● These color pictures taken at the Spring Collections in London show some of the beautiful evening dresses created by the top fashion designers for the festivities of the Coronation season.

●

● Mattli's short evening dress, left, in mauve and pink organdie has a lovely tiered petal skirt.



● Huge boa of fine black net is worn with Digby Morton's simple evening dress of black-spotted white chiffon, above. The beautiful model by Hartnell, below, is made in white and turquoise grosgrain. Pictures by Alec Murray.

● Edwardian evening gown by Mattli is in gleaming amber-rose satin. The beautifully draped apron skirt is edged with pleating. The bodice is beaded in a wheat-ear design.

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671WW. Whirling Wide Circle Skirt cut in a huge hemmed flare to surround you in loveliness. Vat-dyed linen finish cotton that keeps its crispness even after many washings. Terrific value for so much glamour. Jet Black. Waist Sizes: 24½, 26, 27½, 28, and 30½. **Postage:** Vic. 1/10. N.S.W., S.A., Tas., 3/-. Qld., W.A. and N.T. 3/9. **39/11**

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YOUTH FEATURE by Kay Melaun

Do you want to marry?

Almost every young girl I've met in the past year wants to get married.

This is all very normal and natural, but quite a proportion of these girls who say they want to marry will stay single.

- *Don't be too choosy*
- *Men will like you if you like them*

IN 99 cases out of 100 the reason will be that they don't really want to marry.

All the reasons women give for not marrying can be reduced to this one, no matter how plaintively they speak of unrequited love or however wistfully they refer to the years they wasted on some scamp or other.

Whether they be plain or pretty, sweet or waspish, sophisticated or simple, brainy or beautiful, tall, short, fat, thin, the basic reason they haven't married and don't marry is their own disinclination to do so.

You may be still a teenager, not wanting to think of marriage for a while yet.

Your programme may be a few years of wage-earning and party-going, then settling down to husband, home, and babies.

But don't fail to consider the attitude of older women, as betrayed by what they say.

If you're already saying things like this you'd better check up on yourself.

Here are some of the stock phrases:

"I JUST never meet any men." This is the cry of half the girls in the world. If you're one of these girls, ask yourself why you don't meet them.

I'd be willing to bet, incidentally, that there's nothing wrong with you, as you sometimes fear. You may not be a raving beauty, but beauty was never any surety of a wedding ring. Take a look at the wives you know and be reassured anew on that score.

No, but do you, for instance, go out with girls you know or to parties? Aren't you inclined to wipe all such outings as being "boring"? Don't you rather turn up your nose at the thought of joining a club?

Don't you tend to avoid the places where you'd most likely meet boy friends?

Judged by your actions, your opinion of yourself is that you're a violet, an unclaimed treasure, shrinking from discovery by all except that one discerning man.

You'd better give him a chance to find you.

"THE men I meet are all so dreadful."

Perhaps many of them are "dreadful," but on the law of averages they can't all be.

This attitude is often clouded with an idealistic approach to marriage that's fashioned by a childish idea of romance.

Of all the phony attitudes to marriage, this is the one of which young women should most beware. It starts when a girl is young, pretty, and choosy, and it continues well into middle age.

Even at 35 or so, this woman will still be holding out for a husband with money, good looks, perfect health, social position, rugged manliness, etc., etc.

"Oh, Freddie, this is so sudden, at last!"

Not only will this paragon have to want to adore her for the rest of their years, but he mustn't expect any surrender of her cherished little attachments—her job, perhaps, or her preference for country life.

This prince must be a young Lochinvar with his wooing, too.

Of course, the girl may know that this sort of thing never happens, that her ideas are quite unreal.

But she still says she wants to get married.

Actually, what she really wants she gets—she stays single.

"THE ones I meet are all married," betokens that the girl herself is something of a problem.

She may be unhappy because of circumstances, or her unhappiness may arise out of her own character. To herself, however, she is "doomed."

That's a lot of nonsense. She's no more doomed than anyone else.

Driven by unhappiness, she plunges deeper into it. Nothing short of a miserable love-life will satisfy her. She wants to add to her wretchedness and increase her reasons for self-pity.

A happy marriage is the last thing she thinks of for herself. While this mood of defeat and despair persists, she'll continue to meet "married men."

Freudians, incidentally, would expect this girl to adore her father and resent her mother.

This adoration for her father, begun in earliest childhood, still persists in her adult life and colors her attitude to all the men she meets. Usually she is quite unconscious of it, but it is there — this longing for the man already married, and the resentment, probably also not realised, of the fact that he belongs to another woman.

SOME girls are too eager, thus making men reach for their running shoes, but mostly men don't like them for the simple reason that they don't like men.

It's the usual thing in human relationships that if you like a person that person likes you.

Conversely, the people you dislike usually dislike you.

Well, someone has to do the liking first. So why not—if you're sincere in wanting men to like you—show that you're half-way to liking them by being interested in them?

Pretty soon, you'll be finding that men like you.

DISC DIGEST

I'D need a page to register my rave for that terrific two who created "Annie Get Your Gun"—Irving Berlin and Ethel Merman. Decca gives us Merman the Great doing four numbers from the new Berlin show "Call Me Madam," and how she uses that voice! It could cut through a massed brass band. Her articulation is so good that you never miss a word. Just as well you don't, because they're both comic and sophisticated, as befits a play which satirises the U.S.A.'s ambassadorial service. Dynamo Ethel sings "The Hostess With The Mostes' On The Ball," "Can You Use Any Money Today?," "Washington Square Dance," and "You're Just In Love"—with Dick Haymes—(Y6431/2). To round off the musical score, Gordon Jenkins' orchestra adds "The Ocarina" and "They Like Ike" on Y6430. The last number, which must have been written some 18 months ago, foretold Eisenhower's election. Don't miss these discs!

★ ★ ★

JO STAFFORD nurses a broken heart on DO3565 as she sings "Keep It A Secret." You'll wonder why Johnnie Ray didn't grab this song first, because it's damp with tears and follows the current lugubrious mood in pops. On the coupling, "Once To Every Heart," Jo's back in her familiar sentimental mood, but "Secret" will be more likely to make the hit parade grade.

★ ★ ★

IF you liked Louis Armstrong's "Takes Two To Tango" you'll probably want to compare Pearl Bailey's version on DO700015. Backing is "Let There Be Love." Pearl hasn't appeared on a record in ages, and it's a pleasure to welcome back this fine artist.

BERNARD FLETCHER

National Library of Australia http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page4872859

Actors' first dinner-party

In London, New York, and other overseas capitals, leading personalities of stage, radio, and screen annually hold parties at which they can all meet. Sydney actors and actresses decided to follow their example in arranging a party for themselves, and held their first annual Actors' Dinner at the Australasian Pioneers Club recently.

CHARACTER ACTRESS Nellie Lamport (well known as Hilda in the A.B.C. radio serial "Blue Hills") chats to 18-year-old John Meillon, youngest guest at dinner.

FILM ACTOR Charles Tingwell gives an amusing account of his recent visit to Hollywood, while Lyndall Barbour (left) and Margo Lee listen before dinner is served.

RADIO AWARD WINNER Alan White persuades Dinah Shearing to try an after-dinner cigar. Dinah has also won award for her outstanding performance in radio play.

WELCOMING KISS given by Frank Waters to Betty Leggo. Betty's husband, Lloyd Berrell (left), took part in the film "His Majesty O'Keefe," which was made in Fiji.

TABLE TALK halts Madge Ryan's fork half-way to her lips. Her companion is David Eadie, an English actor who has now settled in Australia.

KITCHEN STAFF meets British actress Audrey Teesdale when she visits them after the meal. Audrey, after only a year in Australia, has made a name for herself in stage and radio plays here.

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ARRID

DON'T BE HALF-SAFE. BE ARRID-SAFE. USE ARRID — TO BE SURE!

PHOTO FIND OF THE CENTURY!

A row of cedar boxes discovered recently in a North Sydney shed contained more than 5000 glass photographic negatives taken in the Australian goldfields 80 years ago. They are a superb record of early Australian life and manners. Some of the best of the photographs are reproduced in the

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ANDRE MARCHAL, blind organist, at the Palais Chaillot organ, Paris. M. Marchal is touring Australia for the A.B.C.

First organ Marchal heard imitated a train

By HELEN FRIZELL, staff reporter

Imitations of trains, with tooting and puffing effects thrown in for good measure, were the first sounds that French musician Andre Marchal heard on an organ.

The organ was in a Paris school, the players were small boys in their teens, schoolboy Andre Marchal was the listener, and the time was 48 years ago.

NOW, at the age of 58, Monsieur Marchal has acquired a world reputation as an organist and musical authority. Time has turned his hair into a thick white brush, has sharpened his features into an expression of eagle-like alertness, but has left him with the enthusiasm and humor of his youth.

Blind from birth, M. Marchal—on tour here for the Australian Broadcasting Commission — is accompanied by Mr. Felix Aprahamian, who is honorary secretary of the Organ Music Society in London.

For my interview with M. Marchal, Mr. Aprahamian acted as interpreter, for M. Marchal speaks little English, and I less French. Thanks to Mr. Aprahamian's quick translations I heard the story of the school organ without losing the sense of humor behind it.

"I had started to learn the piano at the age of five," explained M. Marchal, usually referred to as "Maitre" by Mr. Aprahamian. "Suddenly at 10 I felt I wanted to hear organ music.

"Instead I was treated to the train imitations.

"Even that didn't quench my interest, and I went on to study the elements and harmony of organ playing, beginning lessons when I was 14."

Turning his face towards me, M. Marchal went on: "Always discount stories of organists who start their careers as infant prodigies. For an organist plays with his feet as well as with his hands. Legs must extend to the pedal board, and the legs of an 11-year-old boy are not long enough. Mine were just the right length at 14."

Strength in hands

AT the interview, which took place in the harborside garden of a Sydney hotel, M. Marchal sat in a canvas chair, his legs—still the right length—crossed, his hands linked.

The hands which have produced music from organs all over the world are square, straight fingered, and well kept.

In the Parisian home of M. Marchal and his wife, an organ stands in the drawing-room. It is played every day by the organist.

Even holidays are unthinkable without music. The Marchals own a country house at Hendaye, near the Spanish border, where there is another organ called "Johann Sebastian"—after Bach.

To M. Marchal, each organ on which he plays has its own distinctive style. Of the Sydney Town Hall organ he said: "It appeals to me very much. It belongs to one of the best periods of organ building, and is infinitely superior to those being built to-day in London."

In Paris he plays each Sunday in the Church of St. Eustache, near Les Halles, or the city markets. The organ, built by Gonsalez, has all the attributes which M. Marchal loves — "personality, refinement, and outstanding timbre" (or sounds created by vibration).

"There is," says M. Marchal, "no special period outstanding for organ building. But each century has added good things that have improved the instrument," he went on.

"I, and other organists, can tell at first playing the period and nationality of any organ."

In Paris, M. Marchal is a member of a special commission attached to the Ministry of Fine Arts, and is often called upon to advise in the rebuilding of historic or war-damaged instruments.

Busy life

BUSY all the time, he teaches pupils from all over the world who come to his home, and transcribes into Braille the latest compositions for the organ.

M. Marchal intends to enjoy himself in Australia, and Mr. Aprahamian told me that he had already been swimming.

"He went along with Professor Peart's children to a beach in the harbor near Balmoral, and was as keen on the water as they were. It took me all my time to persuade him to come out."

(Professor D. R. Peart is Professor of Music at Sydney University.)

"After Australia," M. Marchal said, shaking hands, "I am off home, then I am touring America. It will be, you understand, the fifth time."

Blues singer's rise to fame

WHEN America's sultry-voiced Lena Horne comes out to sing her blues songs, the chatter and clatter of the night-club with its 1000 patrons is stilled.

This beautiful 35-year-old colored singer commands this silence with the sincerity and intensity of her voice.

She sings to her audience, which responds by sharing her "blues."

Lena rehearses for hours at a stretch before she is satisfied with a song.

Despite this cool determination on perfection of style, she has a fiery temper, which often shows in the way she sings.

The story of how she rose from chorus girl to America's top blues singer is in A.M. now on sale.

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"A daily beauty bath with Lux Toilet Soap gives you a quick pick-up, leaves you so refreshed. Just one cake of this fragrant white beauty soap will make you lovelier."

Q. Why is Lux Toilet Soap so white?

A. *Lux Toilet Soap is white because it's pure! Its purity makes it just as suitable for baby's tender skin as it is for your own! Note the flawless whiteness of Lux Toilet Soap —no tiny impurities mar its even texture—its smoothness proves its purity!*

Q. Which is the largest-selling toilet soap in the world?

A. *Lux Toilet Soap! More people the world over buy Lux Toilet Soap than any other brand! Australians find a shower or bath with Lux Toilet Soap an everyday delight! Buy Lux Toilet Soap today—for all the family!*

Take the advice of 9 out of every 10 film-stars — use Lux Toilet Soap.

Around the clock with a packet of LUX

9 a.m. — Joan's "special" time each morning to wash the coloureds and woollies, *all* the fine things that need safe washing care. Creamy Lux suds keep her fabrics new-looking, her colours bright *three times longer* than strong soaps and harsh washing methods like bar-soap rubbing.

2 p.m. And into rich, creamy Lux suds go the lunch dishes. Lux is so speedy; Joan *never* uses slow, old-fashioned bar soaps! After every meal, do *your* dishes the fast, easy Lux way. It costs as little as a penny a day—and keeps your hands soft and petal-smooth!

9 p.m. Away goes damaging perspiration as Joan's nylons and undies get their nightly dip in gentle, creamy Lux suds. Tests *prove* that Lux doubles the life of your stockings—keeps all your fine things safe. A little Lux does such a lot!

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Film Fan-Fare

By M. J. McMAHON

GLAMOR BLONDE IN COMEBACK

★ After a year's holiday, Betty Grable, the glamor blonde who prefers home life to movie-making, is back in a new technicolor musical titled "The Farmer Takes a Wife" (Twentieth Century-Fox). It is a period piece with musical interludes linking the plot in the Grable tradition. Co-star Dale Robertson plays the farmer-sweetheart of the story.

GLAMOR study of Betty Grable (above). Veteran of many sumptuous musicals, Betty repeats her successful song-dance-and-romance formula in her comeback film, "The Farmer Takes a Wife."

BETTY'S pin-up figure (at left) is in perfect shape for her first screen appearance after a year's absence. She spent two months rehearsing film dance sequences.

CLOSE HARMONY at home. Betty Grable in her favorite role (above) with husband, Harry James, and daughters, Victoria and Jessica (at back).

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A tablet or powder must first dissolve and be absorbed by the blood stream before it can complete its pain relieving action. This is why 'Disprin' acts faster than ordinary aspirin and A.P.C. Disprin enters your stomach in a true solution, substantially neutral and not merely as undissolved acid particles. It is rapidly absorbed by the system and brings relief from pain more quickly.

Disprin is pleasant tasting and even children will take it readily.

Disprin is sold only by chemists, *in packages of 100, 25 and the handy 8 tablet handbag or pocket pack.*

MAKE THIS TEST

Drop a Disprin tablet and ordinary aspirin or A.P.C. into separate glasses of water. See how ordinary aspirin or A.P.C. merely breaks up; see, by contrast what happens to Disprin.
They behave differently in water: they behave differently in your stomach.

DISPRIN (REGD)

THE *New Soluble* ASPIRIN

D1

Be 'SAUCY' with Mustard!

TANGY SAUCE FOR FRIED FISH

Mustard, versatile Mustard, goes with all the good things of life! Try this with fish! Melt 1 tablespoon butter, stir in 1 teaspoon Mustard and 1 dessertspoon flour. Add 1 small cup boiling water, stirring to keep the sauce smooth. Then add 1 teaspoon malt vinegar. Season to taste. *Delicious!*

FRENCH SALAD DRESSING: Place in a glass jar ½ cup salad oil, ¼ cup vinegar, 1 teaspoon salt, ⅛ teaspoon pepper, ½ teaspoon Mustard. Shake briskly before serving, and you'll be charmed with results.

CREAM CHEESE DRESSING: Blend well 2/3 cup of condensed milk with ½ cup vinegar, ¾ teaspoon Mustard, and ½ teaspoon each of salt and paprika. Force a 3 oz. packet of cream cheese through a sieve, and add to mixture beating until smooth.

KEEN'S MUSTARD .. of course

K3/122

Talking of Films

By M. J. McMAHON

★★★ *Come Back, Little Sheba*

TELLING the story of an ordinary married couple on whose lives the lost opportunities of the past have left an indelible mark, Paramount's "Come Back, Little Sheba," is a powerful and moving film.

In a magnificent performance, actress Shirley Booth is a really tragic figure as Lola Delaney, the lazy, ineffectual but kindhearted wife who lives entirely in the past.

In Lola's mind her lost dog, little Sheba, represents the happy days that are gone.

Burt Lancaster gives a masterly portrayal of her husband, Doc Delaney, whose career as a doctor was wrecked by his marriage and who, as an Alcoholic Anonymous of one year's standing, is as eager to forget the past as his wife is to remember it.

Into this household, where the equilibrium is normally a bit shaky, comes Marie, a pretty young university student, played dynamically by Terry Moore.

For Lola, Marie's love affairs recall the light-hearted gaiety of her own youth, but Doc is torn between love for the girl and the protective instinct of a father for her.

Production, script, and acting combine to put on the pressure little by little until the terrifying climax when Doc cracks under the strain, goes on a drinking jag, and finally attacks his wife.

The film ends, however, on a beautifully modulated note as, Marie having left to be married, the couple settle down to a fresh start, realising that they are dependent on each other.

In Sydney—Variety.

OUR FILM GRADINGS

★★★ Excellent
★★ Above average
★ Average
No stars—below average or not yet reviewed.

CITY FILM GUIDE

Films reviewed

EMBASSY.—★★ "Derby Day," drama, starring Anna Neagle, Michael Wilding, Googie Withers, John McCallum. Plus ★ "The Ringer," mystery, starring Herbert Lom, Mai Zetterling.

ESQUIRE.—★★ "The Thief," thriller, starring Ray Milland, Rita Gam. Plus "Actor's Blood and Woman of Sin," drama, starring Edward G. Robinson, Marsha Hunt.

LIBERTY.—★★★ "Quo Vadis?", technicolor drama of early Rome, starring Robert Taylor, Deborah Kerr, Leo Genn, Peter Ustinov.

LYCEUM.—★ "Ma and Pa Kettle Go to Paris," comedy, starring Marjorie Main, Percy Kilbride. Plus ★ "Horizons West," technicolor Western drama, starring Rock Hudson, Julia Adams.

LYRIC.—★ "Because of You," romantic drama, starring Jeff Chandler, Loretta Young. Plus ★ "Bonzo Goes to College," comedy, starring Maureen O'Hara, Edmund Gwenn, Bonzo.

MAYFAIR.—★★ "The Story of Will Rogers," technicolor drama, starring Will Rogers, jun., Jane Wyman. Plus featurettes.

PARK.—★★ "Way of a Gaucho," technicolor outdoor drama, starring Rory Calhoun, Gene Tierney. Plus ★ "The Invisible Wall," mystery, starring Don Castle, Virginia Christine.

PALACE.—★★ "The Big Sky," pioneer Western, starring Kirk Douglas, Elizabeth Threatt. Plus ★★ "Under the Red Sea," marine feature, with Lottie Berl.

PRINCE EDWARD.—★★★ "The Greatest Show on Earth," technicolor circus drama, starring Betty Hutton, Cornel Wilde, Charlton Heston, Gloria Grahame. Plus featurettes.

REGENT.—★★★ "The African Queen," technicolor drama, starring Katharine Hepburn, Humphrey Bogart. Plus featurettes.

SAVOY.—★★ "Manon," French-language drama, starring Cecile Aubry, Serge Reggiani, Michael Auclair. Plus ★ "Paris 1900," English-language feature, narrated by Monty Woolley.

STATE.—★★★ "Mandy," drama, starring Mandy Miller, Jack Hawkins, Terence Morgan. Plus ★ "Gentlemen, The Queen," documentary.

ST. JAMES.—★★★ "Pride and Prejudice," period drama, starring Greer Garson, Laurence Olivier. Plus featurettes.

VARIETY.—★★★ "Come Back, Little Sheba," drama, starring Burt Lancaster, Shirley Booth, Terry Moore. (See review this page.) Plus ★ "Two-Dollar Bettor," gambling drama, starring John Litel, Marie Winsor.

VICTORY.—★★ "My Six Convicts," prison drama, starring John Beal, Millard Mitchell, Gilbert Roland, Marshall Thompson. Plus "Last Train From Bombay," drama, starring Jon Hall, Christine Larsen.

Films not yet reviewed

CAPITOL.—"The Raiders," drama, starring Richard Conte, Viveca Lindfors. Plus "Hawaiian Nights," musical comedy, starring Leon Errol, Lupe Velez. (Re-release.)

CENTURY.—"My Cousin Rachel," drama, starring Olivia de Havilland, Richard Burton. Plus featurettes.

CIVIC.—"Woman of the North Country," Truecolor period Western, starring Ruth Hussey, Rod Cameron, John Agar. Plus "Dark Alibi," mystery drama, starring Sidney Toler, Mantan Moreland. (Re-release.)

PLAZA.—"Bugles in the Afternoon," technicolor Western, starring Ray Milland, Helena Carter, Hugh Marlowe. Plus "The Ring," boxing drama, starring Lalo Rios, Rita Moreno.

"THREE FLOWERS" BRINGS NEW IRRESISTIBLE APPEAL!

Richard Hudnut perfected the exclusive TOP-TONE Shade Control formula of "Three Flowers" Face Powder to bring exquisite loveliness to every complexion. It positively prevents powder from streaking, caking or changing colour. This fine-textured "Three Flowers" gives you a magical veil of loveliness that is beautiful at a distance, breath-taking *close-up*.

"Three Flowers" gently conceals tiny skin flaws, glorifies your own complexion tonings . . . test this new and flawless *close-up* beauty in your mirror . . . actually see the difference it makes to your complexion—immediately!

ROMANTIC NEW BEAUTY TONIGHT!

Close-up—that's where romance is won—or lost. Tonight, look your very loveliest—close-up and from every angle. Choose your own shade of heavenly "Three Flowers" Face Powder today.

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STANDARD GAY BOX 3/11 — ECONOMICAL REFILL, 2/10

Creations of
Richard Hudnut New York London Paris Sydney

Unexpected guests, milk shortages, hot weather hazards present no problems when you keep Trufood in the house. Because Trufood makes as much dairy-fresh milk as you want, whenever you want it. And Trufood is the secret of the most delicious desserts, because Trufood contains no preservatives, it is the whole milk, with only the water removed. A 12-oz. tin makes 4 pints of fresh milk, rich with ¼ pint of cream.

Write to Box 3922, G.P.O., Sydney, for Trufood's exciting free recipe book. Over 70 recipes for all occasions.

TF.55.WW2a

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HIGHWAY
A style from Bond Street

MILTON

Famous English designer teams with Bedggood craftsmen to bring you "Shoes From Bond Street".

Never before have Bedggoods been so lovely...

OUTSTANDING among this year's autumn shoe fashions are original creations by Lyndsey, talented English designer who came to Australia recently by arrangement with Bedggoods. The purpose of his visit was to study Australian fashions and create shoes to harmonise with the tailored suits you'll be wearing this autumn. We believe that you'll be delighted with the new Bedggoods.. They are the essence of good taste and smart dressing. They are impeccably finished in fashion's most wanted colours.. They are beautifully comfortable thanks to American Fractional Fittings. Your Bedggood retailer invites you to call and see these new Bond Street designs. Then you will realise why we say . . *Never before have Bedggoods been so lovely.*

STROLLER
A style from Bond Street

TOWNER
A style from Bond Street

ROVER

Bedggood
THE FRIENDLY FOOTWEAR

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Which Twin has the Toni—

AND WHICH HAS THE EXPENSIVE PERM?

(SEE ANSWER BELOW)

Hairstyles by a leading coiffeur

Nola and June Fookes were enchanting debutantes in their snowy, lace-frothed gowns. They're identical twins and their hair looks identical . . . but it's Nola on the left who has the Toni, and June the expensive perm.

Toni

gives you glamour-hair for every special occasion

Autumn has ushered in some wonderful new fashions and it's Toni time for you! You'll want your hair at its versatile loveliest for days and dances. Gentle-acting Toni actually *conditions* your hair to silky natural softness with a perm that looks and acts like naturally curly hair. And remember — Toni costs so little, you can afford to have yours *right now!*

Toni HOME PERM

WHOLE HEAD REFILL, 13/9

End Curl Refill, 9/11

WHENEVER YOU NEED A PERM YOU *can afford* A Toni

1 RETURNING from school in England, oil heiress Corby Lane (Jean Simmons) arrives incognito in her home town in Arizona. She wishes to repay the town for money which saved her life as a child. As her unwitting assistant in plan, she chooses Dr. Robert Sellers (Robert Mitchum), son of the doctor who saved her.

2 GIFT of diapers for the baby of a well-off family insults them. A gift case of whisky nearly kills the town soak. No one has a clue to where the presents come from.

3 COOLNESS occurs when Robert's girl-friend, Sally (Eleanor Todd), left, appears wearing coat Corby had to barter to get eggs from Robert.

Modern Comedy

JEAN SIMMONS plays the part of a spoilt but generous rich girl in the comedy "Beautiful But Dangerous" (R.K.O.). This is Jean's second American picture.

The romance which blooms between the small-town doctor (Robert Mitchum) and the heiress is an unorthodox one which rapidly develops into a modern "Taming of the Shrew."

Considerable film fun stems from the twist that the economy of the town in which the action takes place is based on the barter system. Jean's misguided but well-meant anonymous gifts completely disrupt the town's economy.

4 QUARREL follows discovery by Robert that Corby is donor of gifts. He keeps the secret.

5 ARGUMENTS follow gift of car to town veterinarian (Wally Ford), centre, who breaks his bonds and goes off to California leaving Robert to care for people and animals.

6 FURIOUS when Robert blames her for loss of vet., Corby pushes him into the river with his pet trout, Hercules. They both end in stream.

7 MONEY sent anonymously to everyone in town disrupts the town's economy. When pandemonium breaks loose, Corby realises she is to blame, and reveals her identity.

8 REPENTANT when Robert saves her from the angry mob, Corby sees how spoilt she has been. She decides to remain in town with Robert.

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Make up TO THE SUN, WIND AND SURF

Lip-Glo is not a skin dye . . . just color glorious color that rises and stays — leaves no lip-prints! For swimming, surfing and all outdoor sports it's ideal. Now only 5/2 with FREE recharge vial!

THE NEW, IMPROVED LIQUID lip-glo WITH FREE RECHARGE VIAL!

PHILIP HARE COSMETICS, BOX 442B ADELAIDE

ZEFF gets rid of unpleasant Household Odours

Kill "H.O." (from stale smoke, mustiness, lingering cooking smells) with quick acting "Zeff"! 5/6

At chemists, grocers & stores

ZEFF Trade Mark

The pure white HOUSEHOLD AIR REFRESHER does not stain

Product of the Chesebrough Manufacturing Company, famous for its "Vaseline" Brand Products. R5

Life CAN begin at 40

No need to feel depressed, nerve and "down-in-the mouth"—your life can go on without a sign of flagging energy if you take WINCARNIS regularly. WINCARNIS is a marvellous blend of choice wines with added nerve-and-body-building ingredients. Just try WINCARNIS — from the very first glass you'll find your system tuning up, your nerves calming, and life taking on a new meaning. WINCARNIS has been recommended by thousands of medical men—that's positive evidence of its high tonic value. Get a bottle today . . . WINCARNIS . . . the Wine-of-Life.

W1.52

Worth Reporting

THE Reverend Eric Arthur Pitt, who will arrive in May to become Dean of the Diocese of Sydney, saw Australia last at the age of three.

His father, the Rev. A. T. Pitt, was for five years chaplain of the Mission for Seamen at Port Melbourne.

Now in his early forties, Mr. Pitt is a good example of a "working" clergyman.

He expects to find a great difference between his work as Dean and his present work as Vicar of St. Matthew's, Rugby, England. His parish covers about half of the busy industrial Midlands city.

The new Dean is one who should appeal to Australian congregations. He is down-to-earth, unassuming, and friendly, writes our London office.

One of the most-sought-after preachers in the B.B.C.'s broadcast church services, Mr. Pitt's voice is clear and uninflected.

A Cambridge graduate, he was ordained at Ridley Hall, Cambridge. He was a lacrosse "blue" and played cricket for his college, Emmanuel. He is also a golfer.

Accompanied by his young, attractive wife and their three sons, Martin, Andrew, and Robert, Mr. Pitt sails from London in the Orontes on April 10.

The Pitt family will move into the comfortable Deanery at Darling Point, Sydney. They plan to bring a fair amount of their own furniture with them.

Mrs. Pitt now runs without help her home at Rugby as well as conducting a fortnightly Young Wives' Club and acting as secretary of the Wives' Fellowship in Rugby.

Patrick lays an egg

IN December, 1950, we announced in our "Worth Reporting" columns that a tortoise called Patrick had arrived in Australia from England.

The other day we received a letter from Patrick's owner, Mrs. A. Mary Smith, of Kyneton, Victoria, giving the latest news of her pet.

"I do feel I ought to tell you that Patrick has this day belied his name by producing a spotless egg," Mrs. Smith wrote.

"It is the first, to my knowledge, in the 16 years I have had him, though he must be rising 50."

As a result of this startling event, Patrick is now known as Patricia.

The egg is now on public exhibition in Kyneton.

A postscript on Mrs. Smith's letter said: "Patricia has just laid another egg."

"She's your wife, Jones. YOU poison her."

JUST another example of the pitfalls of learning English.

A New Australian, asked at dinner if he would have anything more to eat, answered: "No, thank you. I'm full."

He was gently told that the use of "full" was not quite nice. "Satisfied" was the word to use.

So next day when he arrived late for an appointment with some friends, he apologised profusely, saying: "Sorry to be late. The bus was too satisfied."

Britain's memorial to American dead

"DEAR Sir Viscount Trenyard, We are sending some of our pennies. For our dear American soldiers, sailors and airmen who gave themselves for us in the war . . ."

This is the beginning of a letter from a nine-year-old at one of Dr. Barnardo's Homes in Britain, who was one of the several million contributors to the appeal for the American Memorial Chapel in St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

This letter to Lord Trenchard, one of the initiators of the appeal, is quoted in a book, "Britain's Homage to 28,000 American Dead," which has been published by "The Times," London.

A copy of the book is being presented to the next-of-kin of each of the 28,000 American service men and women who were killed while based in Britain during World War II.

The book gives an account of the Americans' wartime sojourn among the British people, and also details of the memorial appeal.

Nearly £100,000 was collected in Britain for the chapel, which is being built in the cathedral on the site of the blitzed Jesus Chapel.

The design of the chapel includes stained glass windows which incorporate the insignia of the 48 States of the Union.

The Roll of Honor recording the names of the dead, which was compiled in America, is now on view in St. Paul's and will be placed in the completed chapel.

LONDON TALK
By Michael Plant

CORONATION preparations at Eton College are nearly as complicated as those of the Earl Marshal in London.

The Queen is paying a special visit to the school on June 16, and I hear that a plan is afoot for the Royal party to come from Windsor by water in a bunting-bedecked barge.

At the Coronation itself Eton's choir will be in the Abbey. Many other Etonians will be there as pages.

★ ★ ★

FATNESS facts published by London doctors debunk a few illusions for people who yearn for that sylph-like look.

Hot baths, they say, are useless for slimming—it takes 370 hot baths, each lasting one hour, to take off one pound.

Exercise, it seems, is just as pointless. You have to walk 36 miles to lose that same pound.

The report comments: "If fat people ate what they say they ate, they would be slim."

★ ★ ★

THE B.B.C. is hanging its head in shame.

After a talk by an important politician, the producer asked the sound effects man for a record of a fanfare.

However, the politician's last words met with a deafening blast of whistles, hoots, and steam organs.

The producer is a Yorkshireman and the record man thought he said "fun fair."

★ ★ ★

BEARDED actor James Robertson Justice owns a priceless piece of wallpaper.

He lives in a 500-year-old millhouse in Hampshire, and on one wall is something which most Americans would trade Brooklyn Bridge for.

Justice is a good friend of the Duke of Edinburgh. They often go shooting together, and before Princess Elizabeth became Queen she and the Duke visited the millhouse during the shooting season.

Now you can see the writing on the wall—the signatures of the Queen and her consort.

★ ★ ★

DEPARTMENT OF TACT: On the set of Pinewood Studios I overheard Anna Neagle politely complain to the cameraman that in the latest rushes she was not coming up as glamorous as he used to make her.

"Sorry, Miss Neagle," said the photographer, "but you must remember I am 15 years older now."

IN AND OUT OF SOCIETY
By RUD

Choose this Winter's coat from the Dominex range, fashioned in 1953's choicest fabrics and shades, available at leading fashion houses throughout Australia.

SS.53.2.16

Quick First Aid PROTECTION

FOR BRUISES CUTS BLISTERS SPRAINS ABRASIONS

Just reel it off the handy spool—

as much or as little as you need! For economy in use, and comfort in wear, choose Elastoplast, the *elastic* adhesive plaster that makes bulky bandages unnecessary. Elastoplast is both firm and flexible, and stretches with the movement of your skin. Also, as it is flesh-coloured it is inconspicuous, and stays clean and neat.

FROM ALL CHEMISTS

Elastoplast

E-L-A-S-T-I-C ADHESIVE PLASTER

First Aid Dressings, in RED tins, also available

SMITH & NEPHEW (AUST.) PTY. LTD., SYDNEY, N.S.W.

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Match them or contrast them!

223 different "DRI-GLO" TOWELS

and every one a long-lasting beauty.

Think of it! Thick stripes or thin stripes, multi-coloured checks and jacquards or the plainest of pastels and new Fifth Avenue stars—Thick, Sculptured whites with deep colour-bands at the sides—in all the colours of the rainbow.

They add up to over two hundred different styles—every style in Dri-Glo's extra thick, extra absorbent double-warp quality, every towel guaranteed fadeless and always true-to-size. And because they're Dri-Glo—at the smallest of prices for such quality towels.

Beautiful Dri-Glo Towels lift even old bathrooms out of the doldrums. *Like magic, their colour-touch in a bathroom—to give your home and your spirits a lift. Choose from 223 Dri-Glo towels the colours and patterns you need. Contrast them with tiles, match to walls or floor.*

Like a camel the way Dri-Glo Towels hold water. *No other towels are more thirsty for water. Double-warp on twofold yarn means they can take it, makes them ideal for tough family wear. Sun doesn't worry them either, every Dri-Glo holds it's colour through it's long life.*

"DRI-GLO'S double warp *for double wear. Colour-fast, too!"*

"DRI-GLO'S beautiful quality *can take seasons of surfing, too."*

"New Cellophane packs *are a boon for DRI-GLO gifts."*

"New Cellophane packs *keep my 'put-away' DRI-GLO'S clean."*

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Social Gottings

PICNIC LUNCH. Mr. and Mrs. R. Druitt, of Dural (left), and Mr. and Mrs. Stan Druitt, of Marsden Park, enjoyed a picnic lunch beneath the gumtrees at the Castle Hill Show.

BARBARA JEFFORD, leading lady of the Shakespeare Memorial Company, and her actor husband, Terence Longden, who were recently married in Christchurch, New Zealand.

CITY and country polo fans will be queueing up some time this year for a Walt Disney film which features world-famous polo player Bob Skene, formerly of Dungog, and his polo pony.

The film, called "The Foal With the Inferiority Complex," is written about Bob's pony. One of the only two ten-goal players in the world, Bob often plays the game with Walt Disney at the polo club in Brentwood, California. He is co-directing another film about a horse and will do stunt riding in the picture.

Bob's sister, Phyl Mackay, and her husband, Ken, of "Melbee," Dungog, will come to Sydney with their horses next Wednesday, March 25, for the Royal Sydney Show. Ken is giving up polo at the Show this year as he has a full-time job as assistant ring-master to Sam Hordern and in competing in the camp-drafting events for the Gloucester Cup.

Phyl will ride her grey hack, Quicksilver, and will compete for the Champion Lady Rider of the Show title, which she won last year. Both are sorry that they will not be home for the birthday of Ken's mother, Mrs. Mackay, of "Gangong," Dungog, who will be 92 on March 30.

AFTER a week's holiday in Sydney, Lady Cross, wife of the Governor of Tasmania, Sir Ronald Cross, will motor to Melbourne this Friday, March 20, and fly on to Hobart. Lady Cross has been the guest of the Governor, Sir John Northcott, and Lady Northcott. She and her secretary, Miss Joan Barnes-Gorell, will return via the Princes Highway.

• • •

RACING enthusiast Mrs. Ernest Burrell has returned to Griffith after going to Melbourne to watch the racehorse Love To All run. Mrs. Burrell's husband, Dr. E. Burrell, is part-owner.

• • •

A HONEYMOON in England and on the Continent will follow the wedding of Fay Jones, only daughter of Mrs. Ross Jones, of Coogee, and the late Mr. Ross Jones, and Doug Williams, elder son of Mr. and Mrs. D. H. Williams, of Denistone, at St. Philip's, Church Hill, on May 7. They will sail in the Italian liner Sydney for Genoa on May 11.

BUFFET TEA. Marilyn McCathie (centre) with Mr. and Mrs. Geoff Coghlan at the buffet tea given by Patsy Scammell and her brother Bill at their home in Clifton Gardens.

A FORMAL dinner party was given by young host and hostess Christopher and Dinah Cullen at their parents' home at Rose Bay before going on to Murray Robson's 21st birthday party. Dinah wore a full-skirted frock of water-green chiffon, pleated from the waist.

• • •

PRETTY wedding in Tamworth on March 27 will be that of popular Tamworth couple Jill Scribner and Bob Hyman. Jill is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Scribner, and Bob is the son of Major and Mrs. Eric Hyman. Jill's sisters, Margot and June, and Betty Johnston, who will fly over from Noumea, will be bridesmaids.

A FROCK of primrose broderie anglaise and a black picture hat were worn by Judy Denniston for her marriage to Lieut.-Colonel Basil F. Anderson Brown, of Greenwich, at Wesley Chapel. Judy is the only daughter of the late Dr. W. C. Denniston, formerly of Bondi, and of Mrs. Denniston.

• • •

FLOWERING azaleas in Chinese porcelain pots lent by Mrs. Mervyn Finlay will decorate the stage when the Kuringai Karitane Mobile Clinic holds an exhibition of fine china and silverware in David Jones' Galleries from March 24 to 27. Mrs. Finlay is exhibiting 40 pieces.

Anne

EX-STUDENTS' BALL. Nadene Grout and Max Cooper, both of Northbridge, at the P.L.C., Pymble, Ex-students' Ball at the Trocadero. Nadene wore grey and white dotted organza.

ENGLISH PUBLISHER Mark Longman (second from left) and his wife, Lady Elizabeth Longman, who was a bridesmaid to Queen Elizabeth; Dr. Harold Wyndham, and Miss Dorothy Knox at a cocktail party at Ushers.

AT ST. MARK'S, Darling Point. Albert McBride, of Adelaide, and his bride, formerly Helen Williams, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Williams, of Double Bay.

GLEN INNES PICNIC RACES. Mrs. Jack Vivers, of "King's Plains," Glen Innes (left), president of the Glen Innes Picnic Race Club, Mr. Forbes Robertson-Cunninghame, and his wife, of "Wellington-Vale," Deepwater; Mrs. Jim Chisholm, of "Burmah," Graman, and Mr. and Mrs. Mick Simpson, of "Willaroo," Ashford, at a party before the Picnic Race Ball.

AMERICAN AMBASSADOR, Mr. Pete Jarman, and Mrs. Jarman arriving in Canberra after the unveiling of a tablet to mark the start of work on Australia's National Memorial to America.

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Rory Harden's

TWEED is the rage, either black-and-white or colored, nobbly or finely woven. Designers are using it for frocks, coat-frocks, and two-pieces, as well as for suits and overcoats. It is particularly chic in the new straight suit with the bloused jacket-back, and in the attractive coat-frock with the almost lumber jacket top.

● Balenciaga makes the tweed suit, above, with a flattering jacket. The back is curved and the short front is shaped at the sides. The wide collar is cut low to join the midriff closing.

● Fringed collar adds interest to the straight line of the suit by Balenciaga, above. The high-buttoned, double-breasted jacket, worn over a straight skirt, is waistless. Note the jacket length — it is chic this year.

● Paquin employs striking green-and-black striped fabric for the model, right. The severely cut jacket is made in a boxy loose-shouldered style. The collar is in black velvet.

● Coarse colored tweed is used for the tailormade by Balenciaga, left. The jacket has emphasis centred on the pockets rather than on the waist, which is barely marked.

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Paris Notes.

● Bloused line of the dress by Madeleine de Rauch, left, is both smart and casual. Fullness springs from the shoulder yoke. The dress buttons through to below the waist

● Jumper suit, above, is made in nobbly tweed. The loose raglan-type blouse is finished with an interesting jersey-knitted basque and extra long tight-fitting cuffs. The skirt is cut with a soft flare.

● Manquin achieves simple elegance in the tweed coat-frock, right. The bodice is bloused with a high neckline and loose, tapering sleeves. Buttons adorn the big pockets on the slim-fitting skirt

● Madeleine de Rauch's black-and-white tweed suit, above, has a long jacket bordered and belted with wide black braid. Colorful contrast is provided by the unusually high-necked blouse designed in yellow velvet.

Dorothea Johnston

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My kitchen was a wreck!

This is how lovely it looked a fortnight later— ALL DONE WITH TIMBROCK

"My kitchen was a wreck a fortnight ago but this is how it looks today. I saved up all my magazine cuttings of smart kitchen cupboards and table ideas and had them carried out in C.S.R. Timbrock. I had no room for a separate eating nook but I was even able to carry out this marvellous little idea for a combined kitchen table, snack bar and shelves with Timbrock."

(By the way—I also installed a beautiful floor of C.S.R. Floor Tile. So easy to clean and costs so surprisingly little.)

What is C.S.R. TIMBROCK?

"Timbrock" is natural wood made stronger and flexible. Can be shaped around corners. Grainless. Splinterless. Lasts a lifetime when used for doors, built-in furniture, panelling and other modern interior uses. Attractive honey color or takes any paint finish. White-ant and borer proofed.

TWO TYPES OF TIMBROCK: (1) Interior use. —(2) Tempered Timbrock for exterior walls and bathrooms.

From Timber Merchants and Hardware Stores in 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 14 feet lengths by 4 feet 6 inches wide, 1/8 and 3/16 inch thicknesses.

CSR BUILDING PRODUCTS **TIMBROCK**

Product of THE COLONIAL SUGAR REFINING CO. LTD., Building Materials Division Sydney. Melbourne. Brisbane. Adelaide. Perth.

DRESS SENSE by Betty Keep

Autumn round-up . . . new trends in day-time fashions

A NEW narrow coat is inching in on the established popularity of the "tent" silhouette. Pared down to uncluttered simplicity, American designers call this slim-line coat the "throw coat," because it can be thrown over anything from slacks to formals.

A typical example of the "throw coat" is illustrated at right.

The waist-fitted coat is still about and looks astonishingly new in thick, fur-like fabrics. Many of the new nubby textured wools are so chic and warm that they are sure to become classics on their own, so it is not "ultra" to choose a so-called poodle-cloth coat. The coat with a fur trim is new, too.

Fresh from recent fashion openings comes a free and easy line in suits—the silhouette was born at Balenciaga's, Paris.

It is a casual line created to give body freedom, meaning a jacket can be faintly indented at the waistline, boxy and tapered to the hipline, or cut straight as a die with slits or vents at the side.

There is still a suit silhouette that is slender and slim with a firm waist—often given shoulder bulk by its own stole.

This is a year when tweed rules supreme. Once it was purely classic, now it is out after five—often with an unexpected razzle-dazzle of glitter.

Example: Pale pearl-grey tweed made strapless with a bound bodice curved to the figure, and a slim peg-top skirt. The bodice, trimmed with black jet, is worn with an enormous matching stole.

Around town blond and pepper-and-salt tweeds are smart in the newest design—slim dress and matching fringed stole.

N.B.: The stole proves to be warmer than a jacket.

D.S. 31.—Slim-line coat in sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 4yds. 54in. material, price 4/6. Pattern may be obtained from Mrs. Betty Keep, "Dress Sense," Box 4088, G.P.O., Sydney.

The planned harmony of the costume look is more than ever effective, combining two or more units.

Example: Slim dress in gold wool jersey, slim coat in grey wool fleece with collar facing and lining of gold—net result, casual ensemble.

Or a dress of sheer wool worn with a hip-length, bulky jacket in tweed. The dress teams a black skirt with a white jersey top, the jacket is pepper-and-salt tweed.

Interesting things are happening to sweaters, which are apt to have a loose-waisted shape, and for sport more elongated lines than those worn last year.

Ribbed pullovers made in thick wool look wonderful in pure white, in apricot-brandy, in vanilla tones, and in the palest blond.

The ribbed middy-blouse cardigan with a banded hipline has style, but it is only for the very chic or the very young.

At night, sweaters are often sleeveless and often glitter with gold thread or jewelled decor.

The shoes that walked in with the Paris autumn collections are of great fashion interest.

Givenchy featured Louis XV opera pumps in black velvet designed with high, narrow heels.

Dior mannequins wore plain opera pumps in black or beige satin with insteps cut a new way, straight across.

Slim-heeled opera pumps in cream-colored calf were seen at Fath's.

More spectacular were "cloven-hoof" opera pumps in red grosgrain with shoe-button decoration. The cloven hoof is a dented toe.

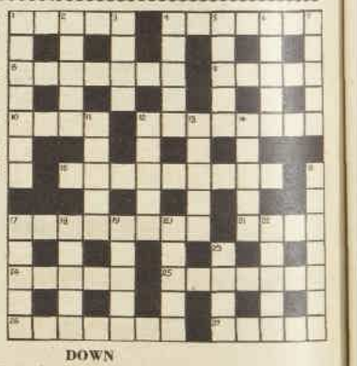
The pushed-back line is chic in millinery, and the neat, small-head look the thing to achieve. Shaggy little back-sliding wool berets and various draped effects look new, so do tiny glitter caps at night.

The Coronation theme is represented by a little hat sitting on the crown of the head. The hat can be a pillbox or tiny flat pancake tilted up in front to look like a tiara.

And lastly, the burning question of hemline length.

For day wear Paris says "10in. to 12in. from the ground." However, we have not all got mannequin proportions, so don't make this a rigid rule. My advice is study your own proportions and then allow a leeway of several inches.

THIS WEEK'S CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. This beer is turned yet fit for a king (5).
4. Birds eternity in hogs (7).
8. Commission to act for another male to count time (7).
9. A short Prime Minister full of ire is most important (5).
10. Gaseous melodies (4).
12. Near gist (anagr., 8).
15. Chew a man with tea in Mussolini (9).
17. Animal H2O and a backward sailor (5, 3).
21. Close turning of kitchen utensils (4).
24. Formal conferment of an American President (5).
25. Copy out from a former short treatise (7).
26. Successfully opposes in the lodging places (7).
27. Measuring instrument could be with a little change a poetic rhythm or 39.37 inches (5).

Solution will be published next week.

DOWN

1. Slops and skill combine to form a protection (7).
2. Hopeless cause not one who arrives, on the contrary (5).
3. Behold an amount somebody lent (4).
4. Iron, this paper went through it (9).
5. Can be a bird, a mollusc, or just somebody who opened his mouth wide and there is always a monkey in it (5).
6. Heavenly hunter with belt and sword containing a Spanish river (5).
7. Agitated colloquy on the stage or anywhere else (5).
11. Panic in races (5).
12. The Arabic and the German tree (5).
13. Backward convulsive twighing at something implied (5).
14. Stress I see in the beginning and you and me at the end (5).
16. Sit pert (anagr., 7).
17. Bet in middle age (5).
18. Personal belongings in parts (5).
19. Scolds angrily, but pay them you must if you are a house-owner (5).
20. Countenances which can develop into tabes (5).
22. As 25 across but not a former one (5).
23. Time not in order for an article (4).

D	I	V	E	R	S	I	T	A	T	E	M	E	N	T
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H	E	R	M	E	N	E	U	T	I	C	A	L		

Solution to last week's crossword.

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3. Antibodies, incited by Lantigen 'B,' attacking the germs, gathering them together and destroying them by oxidation.

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BRONCHIAL ASTHMA . . . *"I am a sufferer of Asthma. I took Lantigen 'B'; when on the third bottle I found relief. I had no Asthma for over twelve months."—K.P., Perth, West Australia.*

CATARRH . . . "I have been a sufferer of Catarrh for over 30 years . . . decided to give Lantigen a trial . . . I bless the day I did . . . The Catarrh has almost gone right out of my system . . . it is nothing short of marvellous . . . I would have been glad to have paid 20 times the price asked."—A.F.S., *Walthamstow, England.*

BRONCHITIS . . . "I first tried Lantigen 'B' for my small son aged 26 months. He used to get Bronchitis . . . It had a wonderfully beneficial effect; we were absolutely delighted, as he never has a sign of the complaint now and looks the picture of health."—A.W.W., *Queensland.*

CATARRH . . . *"I have derived considerable benefit from the use of Lantigen 'B' for Catarrh."—D.W., South Australia.*

RECURRENT COLDS . . . *"About nine months ago I was advised to try Lantigen 'B.' I did so and from that time I have not once contracted one of my customary heavy colds."—L. Van der S., Gampola, Ceylon.*

CATARRH . . . *"I have benefited greatly by taking Lantigen 'B' for my Catarrh."—S.M., Victoria.*

BRONCHITIS . . . "I suffered for years due to Bronchitis—sitting up in bed at night coughing and spluttering. Then I tried Lantigen 'B' and now I'm glad to say I am free."—J.L., *Glasgow, Scotland.*

CATARRH . . . "I have taken a full course of your Lantigen 'B' and it will be about 4 or 5 weeks since I ceased taking it, but it has now rendered my Catarrh, which was severe, quite negligible now."—B.G.C., *Farnsfield, England.*

RECURRENT COLDS . . . *"From childhood I was a constant sufferer of chest troubles commonly called colds . . . My doctor advised me to take a course of Lantigen 'B' before commencement of winter, which I have carried out, and can honestly say I have never had the sign of a cold for twelve years."—E.R., Sydney, N.S.W.*

CATARRH . . . "I have just completed a course of Lantigen 'B' and my Catarrh has almost disappeared."—M.I.M., *West Tamar, Tasmania.*

SINUS . . . "I suffered from Sinus trouble for years, and contracted colds or 'flu with the slightest change in the weather . . . I tried a bottle of Lantigen 'B.' That was 4 years ago and now I would not even fear a bubonic plague."—H.J.L., *Bankstown, N.S.W.*

CATARRH . . . *"I am now on my second bottle of Lantigen 'B' . . . I cannot explain what it has done for me. I feel a new world has opened for me. The head noises have decreased, nerves in better condition . . . sleep comes to me easily. I cannot praise it enough."—L.V.J., Ontario, Canada.*

RECURRENT COLDS . . . "Up to 2 years ago was having practically continuous colds. Decided to try Lantigen 'B,' as colds seemed to be of a Catarrhal nature. I have not had a cold since taking the first bottle."—R.V., *Gisborne, New Zealand.*

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• (The above unsolicited testimonials are taken from among the many thousands on our files. Actual copies may be inspected at our offices.)

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Continuing . . . .

The Secret of the Purple Reefs

from page 10

ing the matter he did not think that he was stranged at all. He had seen it so clearly!

Letting the reefed sail of the catboat snap full to the storm wind as the first big drops pitted the Sound, he was sorry that shyness had stopped him telling M'sieur Henri of the boat that had come to the Sound in the night—when there was no boat.

Surely, there, too, he had not been stranged, for he had heard the engine miss?

As a great sheet of lightning revealed the bending silver shapes of the thatch palms, he sent the catboat through the single passage of the reef and set his course for the coast of Nicaragua, four hundred miles away.

It was his hope that he could prove the existence of the unknown evil if he could prove that Jacques and Christian had not been killed by hurricane. And somewhere there might be a man who would say, "Jacques and Christian of Home Island sheltered here during the storm."

Only when he was well at sea did he remember that he had forgotten to bring food. But there had been many times when Cap' Christophe and he had forgotten it when a new thought had come to them. All that mattered was that his friend Cap' Christophe did not need food any more.

. . . . . .

Sorrow and midnight had stilled the usual amiable pandemonium of the plantation of Domremy—the sole piece of real estate reserved by the marquis' grandson—but as Henri and Joseph entered, Daphne Christophe came with a candle from the great kitchen.

She said, "Put on dry clothes while I bring you hot chocolate!" The grey homespun dress and muslin collar of the women of the Followers were beautiful when she wore them, and the candle lit the dark brown of her eyes and threw the shadows of her lashes on her smooth forehead.

Moving with the lithely graceful, dark and golden quickness of the French women of her native Martinique, she set down the candle and stood before them with a hand on the shoulder of each. "Oh, my dears! I am so sorry that you have come home but to anxiety and debts! Poor lambs who have already done so much!"

Reaching up, she kissed them upon either cheek while Henri smiled at her and Joseph blushed to his black hair. She picked up her candle. "Take this to find your clothes. I have another in the kitchen."

As they rejoined her in the once splendid drawing-room, Henri placed a packing case as a chair for her beside the hatch-cover table and said, "Beautiful sister, the financial situation is most desperate, is it not?"

"It is desperate, even for the Christophes," Daphne said. "For the search, all things movable were sold and all else mortgaged. We have tried very hard to keep expenses down, but the family is so vast that we had to trade all the pigeon-pea crop for stores and now we must be a millstone about your necks."

The brothers took her hands. "The family has told us of all that you have done to keep the family cared for in the bad time," Joseph said. "We are sorry that you have had to struggle so, and we not here to help you!"

Her young face showed the strain of anxiety and responsibility beyond her years, but her eyes were tearless. She said, "Uncertainty is the bad thing, for it begets hope. It was hope that killed Papa Christophe. I know that after these years hope for the ship is folly, yet I am. 'Lost men have returned after many years!' And I hope again."

Henri's hands clenched. For a moment he could not speak, then he said softly, "No matter what, you must never grow bitter, for if I can ever say, 'These men harmed Malcolm, my brother, and broke the kind heart of my father!' I can hate for both of us, beautiful sister."

Aunt Caroline's distant voice was heard shrieking for her medicine, and Daphne rose. "The terrible documents that record our debts and the few that note our assets are in the crawfish pot on the wall. Now that there is no desk, I have to keep them there so the little ones will not get them."

As Joseph opened one half of the double doors for her, and Henri the other, she looked back at the great room against whose tremendous windows the storm was dying. "Even with packing cases, it is still the most beautiful room in the world! As Domremy is the most beautiful place in the world!"

Joseph said, "One thinks of it when one is away."

Moving to pick up a grey parrot that was straddling down the stair with confiding nods of its head and obvious anticipation of welcome, Henri touched his fist against the stair rail that was carved in patterns of fruit and cupids. He said, "Domremy cannot go for any mortgage!"

"No," Daphne agreed. "There would be something profane in anyone but Christophes being here."

ALONE together the brothers mentally contemplated the Christophe household, which was a village in itself and, unfortunately, a village of dependents: including Aunt Caroline, of great age and many exactions, three distantly related widows with, respectively, five, eight, and seven children, and one unrelated group of four orphaned children whom Captain Christophe had adopted.

"We need pen and paper," Joseph said. Henri found them in the crawfish pot.

"Until and unless we can prove what befell the ship and collect the insurance, it seems that we must have a thousand dollars a year beyond the almost we have earned in the past," Joseph said, as the normal morning heat drowsed over the old house.

From without came the golden buzzing of bees and the clucking of guinea fowl. In the courtyard, the Christophes' pet donkey, with a half-eaten cabbage rose sticking to a rubbery lip, slept against the sundial, and a file of Muscovy ducks waddled past complaining of the heat of the flagstones.

"At least none could be more helpful than all the family try to be!" Joseph said.

"But, with the exception of Daphne, it were usually better that they did not," Henri said with truthful affection.

Overwhelmed until he confused the small with the great, Joseph added, "Also Aunt Caroline desires a wheeled chair, having seen one in the wish book."

Henri's mouth curled to a smile. "Aunt Caroline causes

To page 37

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COMPLETE WITH THE TEAT THAT B-R-E-A-T-H-E-S

Continuing . . . . The Secret of the Purple Reefs

from page 36

so much trouble for so many persons as it is, might it not be a poor deed to make her more active?"

"That is true," Joseph said seriously. "But she wants it so." He, too, smiled.

Henri grinned. "She does so much enjoy persecuting the women as they cook or wash—and it is a small pleasure for an old lady! We had better try to get the wheeled chair. If we make a path, she might even be able to render the women's meetings miserable as she used to."

The brothers smiled at each other, thinking of the consternation of the Ladies' Gatherings in His Name as they beheld the horrible sight of Aunt Caroline rendered mobile.

"The question is how?" Joseph said.

There indeed seemed little more that they could do that they had not already done. Even before the loss of the Christophe, both young men had turned over to the family fund all that they had earned in all their adult lives.

It did not for a moment occur to either that the responsibility of the present household was not theirs. But the astronomical sum of an additional thousand a year that the debts and mortgages now demanded could come from no two men's catch shares or wages of Caribbee or the Pacific.

"It would seem that we have three things to do: To prove what befell the Christophe — which would solve all — and meantime to maintain the mortgage payments and fill the mouths," Joseph said, raising troubled gaze.

Henri said thoughtfully, "And all might be done if we but had a boat — and none can be done if we have not."

"A launch to run the mail routes that the Christophe served?" Joseph asked. "But one good enough would cost all of two thousand dollars, though we cut her ourselves. And how could we pay the store men while she was building?"

"It would be hard to have to ask him, but M'sieur Latour would carry us at his store," Henri said, flushing. "For the rest, let us consult the family! And who knows?"

Consulting the family had a special meaning for the Christophes, since it involved seeing what, if anything, each member could throw in toward a common cause, and in this not merely their unity but even their vast numbers had proved helpful in the past.

For just as there had never been a mean Christophe, the quality of generosity appeared to be contagious, since it always transferred itself to Christophes by marriage.

Hence the present concourse listened gravely: Aunt Caroline in a chair, adult Christophes on packing cases, medium-sized Christophes on the floor, and tiny Christophes on the knees of mothers or sisters.

Henri acted as spokesman, concluding, "As you will see, it is in the nature of a venture, but the situation is in the nature of a difficulty."

"It's cockeyed!" Aunt Caroline said, shocking the family by her choice of words.

From where she stood, Daphne spoke simply to the gathering. "For myself, I owe a great debt to the house of Chrisophe. It gave me my husband and such happiness as few women know. It has given me my home and never a moment's sense that I was not welcomed——"

A chorus of assurance from assorted Christophes interrupted her. She was their treasure and their joy. All that they had was hers.

"I know that, you dear, im-

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As I read the stars

By EVE HILLIARD

ARIES (March 21-April 20): March 24 could sweep you off your feet in a whirlwind of activity. Conserve your energy until March 27, which smiles on lovers and all personal relationships.

TAURUS (April 21-May 20): What others consider a disappointment on March 24 you may regard as a blessing which pulls you out of complications. March 27 may give a lift to your bank balance.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21): If a club member, you may rush to an important meeting on March 24. March 28 frowns on hopes and wishes which may, however, be gratified on March 29.

CANCER (June 22-July 22): Looking for a better job or more pay? Interviews on March 25 are smooth sailing. March 28 beams on a mixture of business and pleasure in the morning.

LEO (July 23-August 22): If engaged on a new study or hobby, March 25 may bring you a compliment. If travel is on your mind, make that little expedition to fresh pastures on March 29.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): While March 24 favors getting things done in double quick time to your satisfaction, the week-end holds up a danger signal of possible accidents or loss.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Party-going, stepping out with the crowd may be set down for March 25 or March 27, which is likely to enhance your popularity.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Plans not yet communicated to others may develop pleasantly on March 26 if you follow your hunch. March 27 is excellent for money earned.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 20): Don't count March 26 on the credit side. You may be asked to do favors or a disagreeable task. March 28 is fine for romance or a mild gamble.

CAPRICORN (December 21-January 19): If dissatisfied with your place of residence, March 24 may be a day of upheavals. By March 26 the domestic dust should have settled to your liking.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 19): Exciting news or an unexpected outing could turn March 28 into a day to remember. Letters and phone calls on March 30 may disappoint.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): You could mess up your budget on March 24 and put yourself in the red. Wait until March 26 before taking action.

[The Australian Women's Weekly presents this astrological diary as a feature of interest only, without accepting any responsibility whatsoever for the statements contained in it.]

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Continuing . . . .

The Secret of the Purple Reefs

from page 37

practical darlings," Daphne said. "But since Papa Christophe would not permit me to sell them, I have almost two hundred dollars' worth of embroideries, and if you will take them now, it will give me more pleasure than anything for which I could use them. I have also these two rings that came from my great-grandmother. They are not very valuable, but they should be worth five hundred more."

"More fool you!" Aunt Caroline said.

Other Christophes contributed personal items and odd sums until the astonishing total of an estimated nine hundred dollars was reached. A groaning which even surpassed her normal efforts was now heard from Aunt Caroline, combined with a vicious, snipping sound which had been dimly registering itself on the family consciousness for some time.

The Christophes looked at her, to be appalled by what they saw, for, as they gazed, the superb mass of her snowy locks came away, to be gathered into a ball in her aged hands and flung at Henri.

"I hope you're satisfied!" she said. "There's my hair. White hair is worth six dollars an ounce; eight dollars if it's long and wavy. The hair dealer tried to buy it last time his boat was in. Now take me to bed!"

The magnitude of Aunt Caroline's sacrifice inspired the other women and even the little girls. And soon Daphne's dark tresses lay shining on top of the varied pile on the table, while the brothers, a little alarmed by the response they had got, were staring at the crop-headed women and children, who in turn stared at each other, while all the Christophes laughed softly and helplessly.

"But Aunt Caroline's gift was the best of all," Daphne said, "for she thought of it."

"We are poor men if we cannot manage the rest with forge and axe!" Joseph said joyfully.

He turned to his brother. "Henri, you are the better 'dealing man.' While the family and I start the boat, you must check mail routes and chances of contracts and arrange passage to Jamaica to buy the engines! . . . Now, who comes with me to the forest to cut frames?"

"We do!" shouted the family. "Who last lost the axes?"

. . . .

Arriving at the gangway to the iron shed on piles that was the Port Authority Building of Main Town, Henri found his path blocked by a small donkey that tried to kick him.

"Welcome, Henri! Ah, wait until I assist you!" Monsieur Latour, the elderly and spade-bearded Customs officer, called serenely.

With Monsieur Latour pushing and Henri pulling, they backed the little donkey off the plank.

"Some day I will ask the Government to appoint him to the Customs in my stead!" Monsieur Latour observed.

MONSIEUR LATOUR, actually, was Customs officer only when he faced west across the two-hundred-year-old desk. When he faced south he became assistant commissioner and ruler of the island in the commissioner's absences.

By directly crossing the main street of Main Town at summons of a jangled cowbell, he was the island's leading storekeeper, while, by crossing diagonally at the plaintive blowing of a conch shell, he was the island's only dentist.

On Sundays a great kindness was in his blue eyes and shaven lips as he preached in the little church.

Seated now as Customs officer, he asked, "What can I do for you, Henri? Was it perhaps a matter of money?"

Flushing with the effort, Henri said, "I hate to ask it, but I came to know if you could carry us while we build a boat. We would keep the stores as low as might be, but with milk for the small ones and Aunt Caroline and kerosene for the lanterns to work at night, the bill would run high."

Monsieur Latour looked serenely over his head, and only by his cheerfulness could Henri guess that he was already carrying so much of the island that the request was a difficult one for him to grant.

"I know when I have been kindly treated, and Christophes have done me many kindnesses. Never once have I been made to feel that I was a man of the people and they descendants of the great marquis. It will be an opportunity to repay obligation. Think no more of it!"

"It is good of you' m'sieur. It will cause you no serious strain?"

"None . . . What is your plan for the boat? If you are thinking of running the Christophe's mail routes, the distances are dangerously great for a launch. But I cannot prevent you, the mail routes are open."

"We will take precautions and Joseph is a very great seaman. M'sieur, if it is not inconvenient, may I see the Christophe's cargo manifests and papers for the last voyage?"

Monsieur Latour roughed his beard. "I, too, have thought, 'Something in that last voyage must have been different from all other voyages.' But there is nothing to prove it in the ship's papers. I have been over those bills of lading with a fine-tooth comb." He went to the files. "Take all the time you wish."

Henri read slowly, seeking the unknown amidst the known. But there was nothing in the ship's papers that was not as it might have been upon a thousand voyages.

The Christophe had carried her usual complement of eight islanders—all men whom he had known since his childhood and all members of the gentle sect of the Followers.

In addition to the crew, there had been two first-class passengers for the Isle of Palms: Thomas Webber and William Ashby, both of whom had disembarked safely, to testify that all was well with the ship up to that point.

The ship had also carried five deck passengers, all inland Negroes of Jamaica, bound for Tampa under labor contracts. All five of the dark laborers had vanished with the ship.

"You found nothing?" Monsieur Latour asked as Henri returned the papers.

"It can have no bearing, but what was the business of M'sieur Webber and M'sieur Ashby in the island?"

"They were not even here of their choice. They, too, were victims of misfortune of the sea. M'sieur Webber was owner and M'sieur Ashby engineer of the steamship Webber that was wrecked upon the Purple Reefs in the hurricane that passed a week before the Christophe's sailing, and they made the island in the ship's power-boat.

"When the Christophe arrived, M'sieur Webber arranged with your brother Malcolm to give them transportation to the Isle of Palms—stopping at the Reefs en route to inspect the wreck."

"Poor souls!" Henri said in sympathy. "It was a feat of seamanship that they should reach here!"

"It was perhaps almost a miracle. Conditions had been such before the Webber struck that they were not even certain that it was the Purple Reefs upon which she had driven. Marcin Herera, the captain, and four other Hereras of the Low Cays reached the coast of the Greater Antilles two days after the wreck.

"Being the Hereras, they became drunk, caused a riot and were gaoled for disorder. Six other seamen were lost. By M'sieur Webber's story, they lost their heads and bolted without an officer in the boat."

Henri asked, "Is there record of where the men, Webber and Ashby, have gone? It is unlikely that they have aught to add that might be of help, but they were the last to see our brother, and I would talk with them."

"There should be record in the Isle of Palms." Monsieur Latour's gentle face was troubled. "M'sieur Webber was not a good man, Henri."

"You do not mean that he could have had connection with the loss?"

"No! No! That were impossible! I meant only that he was unlikely to be of help. A big and fair man of light conduct, he had heard of South Sea islands and of island beauties for improper deeds, and had expected to find their counterpart here."

Monsieur Latour's old face showed its shocked distaste, then resumed its normal kindliness. "Ashby, the small and dark man with the barrel chest, had little to say, but he had the eyes of a good man, though sad. He might help you, though it is hard to say how."

After a moment, Henri said, "One more question, M'sieur. A problem of conduct troubles me. The Followers teach the turning of the other cheek. If

To page 40

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The Secret of the Purple Reefs

from page 39

you were attacked, you would not resist?"

Monsieur Latour was a very humble man. He answered gravely, "I am a man full of faults, Henri, and if I am saved, it will only be by grace! But no, I would make no resistance. It is better to be sinned against than to sin."

"I thank you, m'sieur," Henri said, and his hands against the desk were trembling. "I think as always that you are one of the good men of the world, as I think that the people of our church are of the truly good people of the world. Yet I have the thought that both our father and Malcolm, our brother, were very good and very gentle, and I have had the thought that in this matter there may perhaps be need for less of goodness and of gentleness."

As Henri returned from Main Town with the commissioner's promise of the mail contracts, far out over the submerged grass flats Daphne was drawing a fish-net.

Setting down the stores he carried, Henri waded out through the tepid and waist-deep water to aid her.

"Let me have the draw-rope, beautiful sister! And M'sieur Latour has said 'Yes' and m'sieur the commissioner has said 'Yes,' and I have arranged with Captain Royal, of the hawksbill schooner, to give me passage to Jamaica to negotiate for the engines for the launch. And I was extravagant and bought a sack of real potatoes for supper!"

"Potatoes? How fine!" Daphne said. As their hands moved along the wet rope, she said, "I wanted you to search. Now I am afraid to have you challenge the sea in a little launch!"

"Few men know the sea as Joseph does. We will be safe."

She touched her fingers to the worn fabric of his shirt and the large, man-made stitches of its patching. "You and Joseph are very good to us, Henri! And again I am sorry that you have come home only to burdens, poor lambs who are so large and so young!"

Henri laughed. "All is well with us, Daphne! Do not trouble your great age that is two years younger than mine!" He kissed her forehead where the dark hair sprang from the brown satin of her sunburned skin.

"Remember," he said, "that we can learn only what befell—anything more is past hoping. And when you do not hope any more, try to remember that there is no finer man than Joseph. He may not know it, since he loved Malcolm, too, but he has loved you since you came to us. Also, we would keep you always a Christophe."

With her face washed in the crimsoning light, she said, "I know—and you are both dear to me as my own—but I do not think that I could love twice even if I wished it."

"Then some day be merely kind to him! Being kind and loving run very close akin, and one might surprise you by growing into the other—and he is worth both." He smiled at her. "Joseph has all things but words in his own behalf, so that is why I say for him what he cannot."

Carrying the fish and the stores along the jungle path, Henri said, "Since their presence was accident and they had left the ship ere disaster came, it can hardly have bearing, but what was your thought of the men, Webber and Ashby, who were passengers with the Christophe? M'sieur Latour, who dislikes almost no man, disliked the big and fair man, Webber."

"He was detestable," Daphne said. Her voice shook with anger. "On one of the days he was here, I saw him tormenting a bird that had fallen and broken its wing. I thrust at him with a piece of broken wood, and I thought from his eyes that he would strike me. But others of the women came and they beat him with their umbrellas and made him run."

She added thoughtfully, "But men do not sink ships because women have offended them. Nor do I think he would ever have had part in true violence. He was too much afraid for his white skin . . . For M'sieur Ashby, one was sorry, one did not know why."

During the next week, Tobias moved patiently up the muddy coast of Nicaragua, explaining to turtle crew and net weaver and to the dwellers on stilted platforms in the swamps, "I am Tobias, of Home Island, seeking news of my son, lost with the motorship Christophe. Also of Jacques and Christian, of my island, believed sponging here before the storm that preceded the Christophe's sailing."

In two months he had verified only that Jacques and Christian had been working the sponge fields shortly before the storm.

"It is of the storm's self that I would learn," Tobias explained. "I seek one who can say 'Jacques and Christian, of Home Island, sheltered here in the storm, thus were not lost in it, as has been thought.' "

And at that, pity would stand in brown eyes that said, "Tobias is stranged!"

ON a fierce noon, Tobias was sailing a little estuary and was about to swing seaward when he saw a lead through the mangroves. Far in amongst the mangroves, the cormorants perched, indicating a hidden lake. He swung the catboat in where the mangroves made green shadows on the brown-dyed water.

During the same weeks on Home Island, Joseph worked eighteen hours a day at the boat. Adult Christophes chopped, pegged, sawed, and painted; medium-sized Christophes got in the way.

While in Jamaica, through a combination of vehement bargaining, sleeping in the gardens and eating one meal a day, Henri succeeded in realising enough to buy two second-hand engines and the necessary hardware.

And three months and one day from old Captain Henri Christophe's death, the launch rode proudly at the foot of the Queen's Steps, half buried in flowers thrown by cheering islanders.

Aunt Caroline broke an already cracked milk-coconut on the bow. "I christen thee Sea Lily!" she shrilled; adding, "And it should be Sea Silly!"

"Find the Christophe, Henri and Joseph!" the old captains shouted.

"Find the Lost Galleons for us, Henri and Joseph!" little Christophes yelled.

"We will try," Henri and Joseph answered.

Joseph opened the throttle and the overladen launch was off.

"From here to the Isle of Palms we know that men who should have no reason to lie say that all was well," said Joseph. "But we must say, 'We are no longer completely sure of men and must ask sea and sky and bottom if all was well when our brother passed this way.' "

"I, too, have thought, 'The open sea has little to tell us.' Yet, if we pass often enough, some thing of sea or sky or bottom may answer us! And at least we know all that may be learned from the island!" Henri answered.

"Which is little," Joseph said sadly. "Though we know two small things. There were two strangers from afar, and the Christophe was two days late at the Isle of Palms."

A school of flying fish rose on the quivering rainbows of their wings and beautifully re-entered the sea.

"Both Daphne and M'sieur Latour disapproved of the passenger, M'sieur Webber. For pleasant or otherwise, he must have been a man of parts," Henri said, smiling. "He postured at the dancing sea. In opposite direction we saw following the course of M'sieur Webber and the little man, Ashby. It is long and hard. And they traversed it from a wrecked ship through the ultra whip of hurricane."

For two days and nights the launch ran the open Caribbean, the brothers taking six-hour watches. On the third afternoon they sighted the Purple Reefs, their presence marked by a ceaseless lifting of the swells.

Joseph edged the launch in over the tablelands of the reefs and into a small crescent amongst the low dunes that formed the only place in which the reefs broke water. Between the horns of the highest dune was a bay so delicately green that it seemed a pale jewel set in the blueness of the sea.

The brothers surveyed the bay for possible sharks, then plunged overboard and swam ashore. The place was one that they had loved as boys, for to a boy there could be no more marvellous hunting ground.

Sea birds made it a nesting place, and in their season fine eggs could be had for roasting in the ashes. The telltale flotsam of the Caribbean and two continents stranded on the windward beaches and the finest pink conch shells of Caribbee were to be had from the mouth of the bay.

As added wonder, round Spanish ballast stones could sometimes be found in the reefs of dried turtle grass, or, more occasionally, a piece of crude gold. For legend had it that it was here that hurricane had overpowered the Three Galleons that had touched at Home Island, paying for water in the coins of gold that were in the commissioner's museum.

The Christophes themselves owned an old "treasure chart" of the Purple Reefs, but none of the family had ever taken it seriously. Yet great treasure had been lost by ships of the Spanish Main, and had not been found again.

Looking at the purple-spotted leopard skin of the submerged tableland, Henri wondered if it were actually here that the Three Galleons had spilled their gold. If somewhere beneath the brilliant waters within range of his vision there did lie wealth beyond the dreams of men.

His mind derided, but his heart beat faster and his hands tingled.

He said, "That must be the Webber." For to eastward, where the tableland dropped off to one of the great deeps, lay the shattered bulk of a steamer, infinitely lonely in this the loneliest spot of the Caribbean.

The area of the reefs between the dunes and the wreck was too shallow for the launch, but Joseph said, "There is time. Let us swim out to her."

And presently they were gliding through the water beside the rusted hull to a point where the green swells sucked against the tilted decks.

To be continued

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The Curious Crime

Part one of a two-part novel by A. E. MARTIN

DAVID

I SUPPOSE, in a measure, I had contributed to the note of mystery and suspicion attaching to my trial for the murder of Aunt Maly. Naturally I hadn't told the policeman about Peter. As a matter of fact it had been my intention to keep him a secret from everybody, and then I discovered that, somehow, the barrister, Featherstone, had heard his name.

I had always thought of a murder trial as something highlighted with dramatic incidents, but there was so much legal jargon, so many technicalities to be endlessly discussed that, although I was the principal, I confessed to early boredom. All those witnesses who really never witnessed anything at all! Men and women, good, bad, and sometimes plain stupid like Hildegard, the cook, and seldom as intriguing as the maid, Celeste.

What a fraud she turned out to be!

I didn't have to listen to her evidence. I'd heard it at the preliminary inquiry.

She worked for Mrs. Glass. On the night of the crime she had fixed Mrs. Glass up for the night and gone to bed at ten. At 6 a.m. she'd gone downstairs and found Mrs. Glass strangled.

No, it wasn't what she said that made me find Celeste intriguing, though, I admit, disappointing. I'd grown so accustomed to her trim uniform, with its cute white cap, frilly apron, and short black skirt, her high heels and well-hitched silk stockings, that it gave me a jolt to see her in a grey tweed suit and small hat.

By comparison, my cousin Cynthia Warren looked awful. Her mental wriggling was surprising, for, although I had always felt she regarded me as a species of poison ivy, she was trying hard to give me a good character.

I believe, in her heart, she thought me guilty. I got the impression, too, that one of the women on the jury was prejudiced against me. It had been a mistake to smile at the extraordinary red feather she wore in her hat.

One of the newspaper men had huddled shoulders and a long, thin neck with a conspicuous Adam's apple. The neck kept stretching and receding as though it belonged to some investigating vulture, and his bright little eyes lifted and fell while his busy talons flew over the paper. He was making a sketch of me, and I didn't mind. There is nothing in my personal appearance to make me self-conscious or excite ridicule.

I am twenty-one, tall and well set up, with square shoulders. I have dark eyes, a firm chin, good profile, black and naturally glossy hair, and nicely shaped ears set closely to a narrow head. This is not my assessment, but that of Claudine, who enumerated my points one afternoon after I had rhapsodised over her own bewildering beauty.

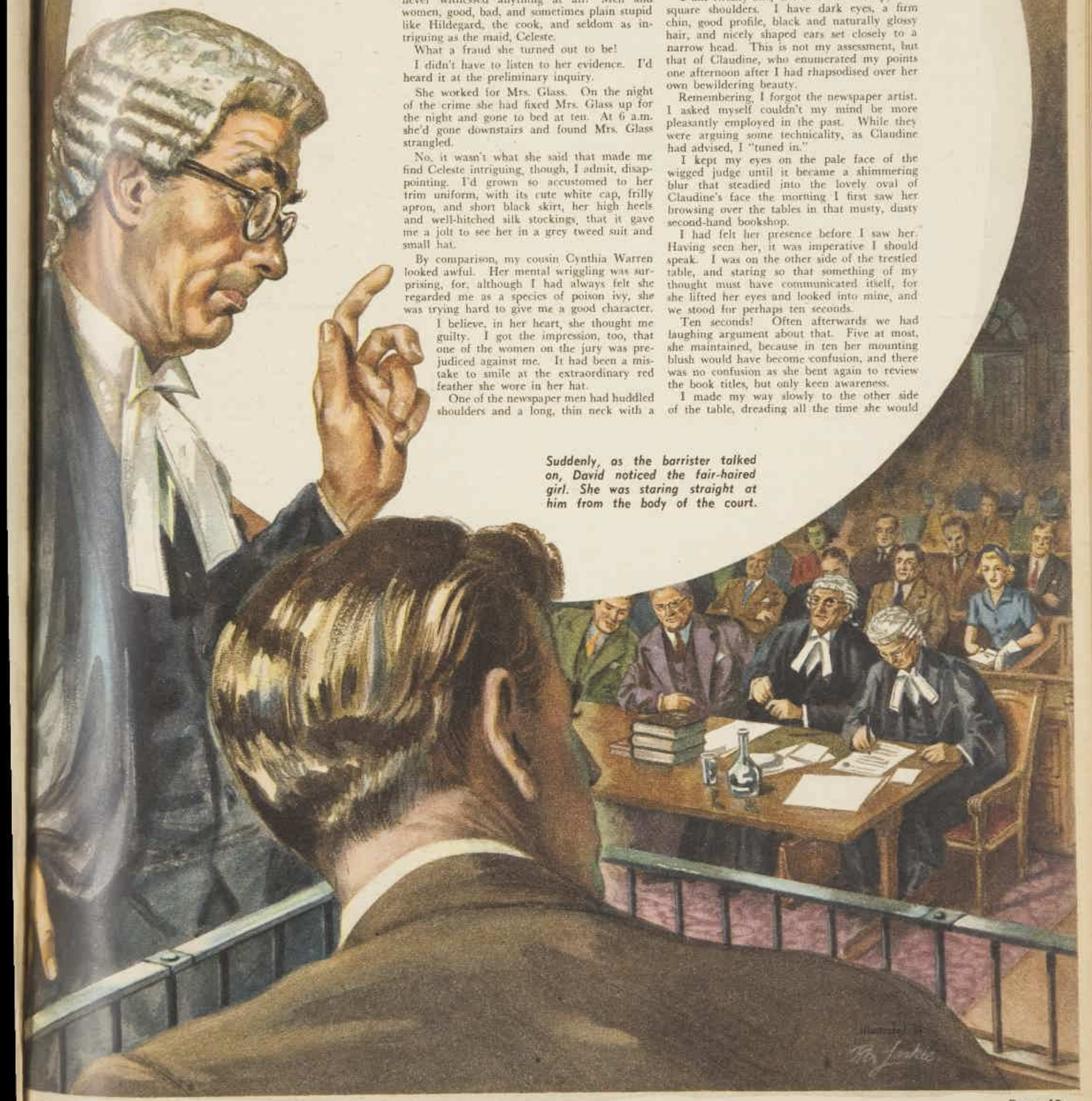
Remembering, I forgot the newspaper artist. I asked myself couldn't my mind be more pleasantly employed in the past. While they were arguing some technicality, as Claudine had advised, I "tuned in."

I kept my eyes on the pale face of the wigged judge until it became a shimmering blur that steadied into the lovely oval of Claudine's face the morning I first saw her browsing over the tables in that musty, dusty second-hand bookshop.

I had felt her presence before I saw her. Having seen her, it was imperative I should speak. I was on the other side of the trestled table, and staring so that something of my thought must have communicated itself, for she lifted her eyes and looked into mine, and we stood for perhaps ten seconds.

Ten seconds! Often afterwards we had laughing argument about that. Five at most, she maintained, because in ten her mounting blush would have become confusion, and there was no confusion as she bent again to review the book titles, but only keen awareness.

I made my way slowly to the other side of the table, dreading all the time she would



Suddenly, as the barrister talked on, David noticed the fair-haired girl. She was staring straight at him from the body of the court.

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THE CURIOUS CRIME

find what she was seeking and fly. I picked up and replaced books without thought of title or content. My elbow brushed her arm and she did not shrink. And then, inevitably, we reached for the same book. Her gloved fingers fluttered on the back of my hand . . .

"Court's adjourned."

The stolid policeman with the huge moustache, who had been sitting behind me in the dock, had risen and placed his hand on mine. I preceded him down stone steps, and, in the room below, he gave me a drink of water. Then the barrister, Featherstone, hurried in.

"I think it would be fair to say things are coming out a trifle better than we expected," he said. "But you mustn't build high hopes." He pushed his wig back and scratched his head with a stumpy forefinger. "Tell me, how long have you known this Peter—" He snapped vexatious fingers.

"Always, off and on," I told him.

"H'm!" He brooded, massaging his chin. "Seen him since your aunt's death? Talked to him?"

"Seen him, yes," I admitted. "Talked to him, no." The policeman had seated himself on a stool by the corridor door and was eating a sandwich. I urged Featherstone into the farthest corner. "The day of my aunt's funeral he came along the gravel path between the graves, and then the two men wearing black armbands and pretending to read the inscription on a tombstone spoiled everything. Anyone would have known they were detectives." I laughed. "They might as well have had crepe beards."

"My dear Curtis," the lawyer expostulated. "I wish you would not forget the seriousness of your position."

"Don't begrudge me some fun, Featherstone," I pleaded. I knew how quickly blacker moods would crowd in.

He hastened to assure me that nothing was further from his mind and stood hesitating at the door while the chap in uniform looked up at him from his stool, sandwich suspended.

"I'm thankful you're in such good spirits," he said. He peered with his monkey head on one side. "I can't make up my mind whether to put you in the box." When I offered no suggestion he sighed. "Well, maybe we'll manage without you testifying." He cleared his throat.

"My dear lad," he went on earnestly. "I am aware of your sincerity. But in the circumstances it may be wiser to keep this Peter a secret between ourselves." As if I wanted to share Peter! "Juries are unpredictable. They might think you invented the fellow to shield yourself."

When he had gone I began to think of Peter. I was surprised that, just when it would be comforting to talk things over with him, I had been unable to make contact.

A knock on the corridor door prefaced the arrival of a tray of food. The Moustache set it on the deal table and whisked away the covering napkin. "Lumme! They've done you proud!" he exclaimed, sniffing. "There's enough for two!" I believe he was expecting me to invite him to join me. When he realised it was no go he said he'd be enjoying a pipe in the corridor. "You've only to knock if you need me," he said.

I had been staring at the white napkin. I called sharply, "Walter!" and he wheeled about. "Set another chair," I ordered. "Hurry." I said, casting an appraising glance over the table. "And stop grinning. I can't think what's come over you." When he had set the chair I waved him away. "When the lady comes show her in. You may wait within call."

"Thanks I'm sure." He was mock polite, but I had no time to puzzle over his vagaries. The napery was spotless, the silver shone. She would like the bowl of red roses and the posy of violets. I lifted the lid of the high tureen and a spiral of steam arose. Everything was piping hot from the restaurant. If only she wasn't late. But she never was. Not Claudine. I had a feeling that my white tie was not sitting properly and was hastening to adjust it when she appeared.

"Claudine." Her grey eyes were twinkling as she awaited my reaction, for this was the first time I had seen her in evening dress. I took her cloak, and she bent to the roses while, enchanted, I watched the ivory of her neck and shoulders.

"Adorable," she murmured, and I could not but echo, "Adorable," and she took my hands, stepping back the better to look me over, for this was her first glimpse of me in tails.

"Mm-mmm," she said. "Fodder for the films!" and forestalling my embarrassed disclaimer, "That reminds me. I'm ninety per cent. famine. Is that my favorite soup?" She lifted the lid of the tureen. "It is! David, I hope you haven't been listening at keyholes."

I held her chair for her, then moved to my place, watching as she pinned the violets. "How nice!" she said and smiled across the table. "Just the two of us!"

The lock of the door clicked, and I turned with annoyance to see Dr. Ellershaw and another man at the entrance. Ellershaw came to the table, a slim, middle-sized man in the greying fifties. "Just the two of us, David," he was saying. "I hope you don't mind."

I had been so caught up with our dream tete-a-tete I found it impossible to swing back at once into realities. "Claudine," I said, "allow me to present Dr. Ellershaw. Dr. Ellershaw—Mrs. Clanmorgan."

But Claudine was already fading. I saw her disappointment replaced by a humorous lift of arched brows, and as I lost her the delicate shoulders shrugged acceptance of unkindly fate.

Ellershaw was saying, "This is Dr. Foulkes, David." I stretched my hand mechanically. Foulkes was a skeleton of a man with a domed forehead and shrewd but not unkindly eyes.

"Dr. Foulkes and I would like to have a chat with you, David," Ellershaw said. I hadn't seen him for years till one morning he popped into my cell and, with his easy manner and engaging voice, took up the threads of a friendship with no suggestion they'd ever been broken.

Often he came to see my mother when she lived at Warriewood. Once when I must have been six, he had caught me peeping at him through the banisters as he came slowly down the broad stairs, his black bag in his hand.

"Hello, Davykins," he called. "Just the man I wanted."

"What's the matter with my mother?" I asked him.

"Oh, she's a little tired." He produced a coin. "It's an old Indian custom for real friends to exchange tokens," he said. "This shilling's got a hole clean through Queen's Victoria's forehead. And you must give me something in exchange."

I turned out my pockets and found a marble.

"An agate!" he exclaimed. "Oh, no, David. Nothing valuable. Any old thing. One of those cords you've got looped over your arm, perhaps."

I gave him one of the long pieces of thin rope, and he stowed it in his bag. "I'll treasure that," he said after I'd told him it had a real slip-knot at the end. I was going to explain how the butcher's boy had made it and shown me how, if it was looped over the neck of a kitten, when the kitten ran away the cord got tighter, but he looked at his watch and said, "Dear me, I've got to rush or I'll never be able to mend Mrs. Grant's leg," and then Hobbs, the butler, was holding the hall door open for him.

He called back. "By the way, Davy, do you still see Peter?"

I thought he was joking. "Silly! There he is on the stairs. The butcher boy gave me a slip-knot for him, too."

"How foolish of me," the doctor said, peering past the grinning Hobbs; then gazed across the spacious verandah to where the sun was splashing the marigolds along the garden borders. I could hear the shouts of trespassing children in the shrubbery alongside Aunt Maly's parlor as Dr. Ellershaw called, "It's lovely out. Why don't you and Peter go and play with the other boys?"

I REMEMBER being grateful to the doctor for not pressing the suggestion and hating Hobbs for laughing, because I knew very well what was making Hobbs laugh. Peter was thinking the same as I—if we put a slip-knot about Hobbs' neck and both pulled, it would take the grin off his ugly mug. Then I was again in the present and Ellershaw's hand was on my arm.

"Would you care to tell me what you've been thinking of, David?" he asked.

I liked Ellershaw. "It was about you," I said. I recalled for him the exchange of tokens and with half-closed eyes he ransacked memory. "Don't you remember the cord with the slip-knot?" I asked.

His eyes snapped open. "The slip-knot. Of course. I gave you Queen Victoria with a hole in her head." He explained to Foulkes, "David and I have been good friends for many years," and went on to speak of my aunt's house, Warriewood, and the verandah with the cane lounge on which I'd warned him not to sit because it had broken.

He recalled how brightly the marigolds grew and spoke of Hobbs, who always tried to get a prescription for nothing, and Cynthia, who was so often sick, and how lovely my mother was. It was pleasant to listen. "And there was another boy," he said, brow wrinkling.

"That was Franklyn," I said. "He's up there in court. I didn't like him in those days. He would never let Peter play."

"Peter?"

"Surely you remember Peter? He was there when we swapped tokens."

"Of course I remember Peter," he said, smiling. He offered his cigarette case. "Pete, eh? I suppose you lost touch with him long ago?"

"Only at intervals," I told him. "He always came back, when I wanted him, till I met Claudine. Then he disappeared."

"I see." He snapped his lighter shut and Foulkes said, "Claudine is, of course, Mrs. Clanmorgan? This Peter returned after Mrs. Clan . . ."

"Yes," I shouted interruption and crumpled my cigarette so that it burned my palm. I knew what the man Foulkes was going to say, and I didn't wish to hear.

Ellershaw was offering his cigarette case again as if I'd behaved normally. He said, "I suppose, David, you were glad to see Peter again?"

"Yes. I—I found him a great comfort."

"Do you know why he had been away?"

"Oh, yes. I hadn't need of him."

He flicked his lighter for me. "Had you missed him?"

"No."

"You'd forgotten about him?"

"You may think it strange," I said, "but while I had Claudine . . ."

"It was as though Peter never existed," he suggested and that, of course, was true and rather puzzling.

Foulkes' eyes twinkled at me. "Have you seen him lately, Mr. Curtis?" I told him not since the day of Aunt's funeral and he asked, "You spoke together?"

"No. He was there one moment, the next he'd gone. There were detectives. Masquerading."

Ellershaw rested his hand on my arm. He said, "I'm your friend, Davy. Come thick, come thin. David, in a little while you'll be going back into court. You understand what's happening there?"

"I'm not a child," I said. "They're saying I strangled Aunt Maly. It's hooey. Peter did it."

"How do you know, David?"

"The cord was his. I suppose he took it from the nail. He must have worn my slippers. We're the same size." I was becoming exasperated. "Don't you listen to what is said in court?"

"It's all right, Davy," Ellershaw said reassuringly, and glanced at his watch. "By *Jove*, it's later than I thought. I want to catch an art exhibition this afternoon. Gravellini. You've seen his work, of course?" He squeezed my shoulder. "I'll tell you about it later."

Foulkes slid from the table and held out his hand. "Goodbye, Mr. Curtis. Thanks for seeing me."

After they'd gone my mind teemed. Art galleries. Women in white dancing in a purple grove. A box of chocolates and Claudine's fingers fumbling. Her hair tickling my cheek. A whisper over music. "I shan't be away long, David, and you can write."

There was paper on the table and envelopes and they'd left me my fountain pen. I began to write about the trial and then scrapped it, and, taking fresh sheets, poured out new words. Nothing of the present. Nothing of dead Aunt Maly nor Peter nor Ellershaw and his long-legged pal. Nothing but the sheerest nonsense. The sort of craziness one doesn't dare to express to any but one perfectly in tune.

It was all I could do to cram what I had written into the envelope, which I gave the Moustache to post. My steps kept pace with my racing thoughts as, in my mind, I saw her receiving and reading the crazy letter. Through the tiny *rectangular opening* high in the corridor door I could see the top of the Moustache's cap. His voice came clearly.

"Lumme, if he's not cuckoo he's putting on a good act. Calls me Walter. And look at this letter he's asked me to post. Mrs. Claudine Clanmorgan! Well, I ask you!"

I stopped my pacing, listening as another voice drifted. "Clanmorgan! Bli'me!" A coarse laugh sent a spinning pain through my head. "I wonder what postie's going to deliver that!"

Stairs, ill-lit, twisted and turned in a cubist nightmare. A man sang over the radio, a scarf reddened with blood. From far off came a zooming that grew in intensity till it filled my brain with a shattering agony of sound.

The judge, I discovered later, had had to postpone my trial for an hour.

. . . . . .

There was a buzz from the body of the court as I appeared in the dock, and I felt a hand under my elbow. A rough voice muttered encouragement. "Keep your pecker up."

That's what I had to do. Keep my pecker up. I was grateful to the judge for demanding order and for the silence that obtained till some lawyer began questioning the long-legged Foulkes.

"Your name is Elvin Carstairs Foulkes? . . . You are a Doctor of Something at the University of Somesuch?"

There was a whisper in my ear. "Tune in—tune in" and almost at once there was no more court and I was in a cheap cafe near the bookstore in which I had met Claudine and we were gazing at each other across a sugar-bowl. We had known each other exactly five minutes and she was saying . . .

"I should know your name—No, don't tell me. Stoodlepacker. Phineas Stoodlepacker."

"How right you are," I said. "As if it mattered."

"Oh, but it does matter," she argued. "Supposing someone either of us knew popped in?"

There wasn't much chance of that. It was the tawdriest of cafes. We had been so thrilled at discovering each other that all we'd wanted was to talk and talk, and the cafe happened to be the handiest place able to oblige with chairs and privacy.

"Besides, I don't know anything about you," she persisted.

"Know you then," I began, "that I, a ne'er-do-well, had but this morn repaired to the bazaars when . . ."

The proprietor of the cafe had come to the table. He was a fat foreigner with expressionless eyes.

"Trimalchio," I cried, "meet the Princess Badr al-Budur."

"Pleased." Unsmiling, he gave a little bob. He flashed the menu. "Bacon and egg. Egg and ham. Egg and toast."

Claudine looked crestfallen. "No dormice in honey."

He shook his head. "We do not stock. Bacon and egg . . ."

"Coffee?" I suggested.

"In two colors," Trimalchio said a little unexpectedly.

"Oh, I should love two-colored coffee," Claudine cried. She squinted at the cafe man in absurd hope. "Purple and green?"

"Black and white," he said. "Take her or leave her."

I suppose I laughed — too loudly, perhaps, because I jolted out of my dream to find the judge peering over his spectacles and everyone staring at me. It was never possible for me to abruptly dismiss the images of my dreams. The cafe proprietor who had so completely satisfied our crazy mood that eventful morning was still hovering and, if I continued to smile, it was at recollection and with no intention of offending. I apologised to the judge and he considered me gravely, coughed dryly, and told Featherstone to continue.

"The evidence before us is simple," the barrister began. "Mrs. Glass was strangled with a cord which had been in the attic room where the accused slept on the night of the murder. This we admit. But what has to be proved beyond any doubt is that the evidence guiltily links David Curtis with the crime."

All were looking at Featherstone. All but one. A fair girl of about my own age, dressed in blue, was staring at me from the body of the court. When I suddenly noticed her, she smiled faintly as though inviting recognition, and at once I was remembering my attic room in a long-distant day.

I was sitting on the floor, cross-legged, while a little girl in a fluffy dress was saying, "Let's play Through the Looking Glass. I will be Alice and Franklyn can be Humpty Dumpty sitting on a wall."

Franklyn was two years older than I. He said, "That's silly. There's no wall."

"It isn't silly at all." The girl stamped her foot. "I'm pretending. So does Davy. Davy, what will you be?"

"The white rabbit," I said eagerly.

"Very well," she agreed. "And we'll say the funny things in the story like 'Who-did-you-see - on - the - road - nobody - quite - right - this - gentleman - saw - him - too'."

"Aw," Franklyn objected, "you can't see nobody. Anyway, I hate books."

I was enthralled at the prospect of a congenial playmate. "And if you like I'll ask you to recite, 'You're Old, Father William,'" I told the girl. "And Peter and I can be the walrus and the carpenter walking hand in hand."

I still remembered how I hung on that fateful pause before she said, "Very well. And if Peter forgets to weep you can whisper to him."

"Pooh, I think you're bats," Franklyn said. "Anyhow, you can't play pretending because you've nothing to dress up in."

"But we can imagine," the girl said. "Really, my dress is very much like Alice's. And goodness, Franklyn! Just look at Davy turning into a rabbit! Can't you see his big ears?"

"No, I can't," he said, stubbornly. "No more than I can see David's Peter. 'Cause why? 'Cause he's not there. David makes him up. My mother says . . ."

"You be quiet, Franklyn Greene," the girl said sharply. "I can see him even if you're blind. If you don't want to play you can go down into the garden and eat worms."

An adult voice called from below, "We're leaving now, children," so after all there was no game of make-believe. Franklyn had gone pounding down the stairs but the girl bent and kissed me. "I wish we could have played some more, Davy," she said. She waved from the door. "Bye, Davy," and, turning her hand the tiniest bit, "Bye, Peter."

I never forgot her for that thought. I could never recall her name and yet, now, in the crowded court, it came fumbling to my lips. Nita. Anita. Melita. That was it.

My lips framed the word "Melita," and the girl in blue gave an eager smile and a quick nod as Featherstone sat down. I began to wonder where she had been all the years and what had been happening to her and most of all why she had come to the trial. I was aware of an unaccountable happiness that she was not with Cynthia but was seated quite away from them.

Franklyn was scowling, worrying doubtless about how things they had harassed him into telling. If he'd only known I wasn't blaming him. He had told the truth about what he had heard although it was Peter, not I, who used the words.

There was no confusion in my mind at the time they were asking him questions.

"You say you were standing just outside the bedroom door of the accused?" (That was the lawyer.) "What time was it, Mr. Greene?"

About midnight, Franklyn told them. I think he was correct. I fancy I heard a clock striking the three-quarter hour just after I had switched off the light.

The lawyer asked Franklyn, "What induced you to go upstairs at that hour?"

He told him, "I'd gone to bed but I couldn't get off. I wanted something to read. I thought David could lend me one of his books. He had hundreds." An exaggeration that.

"Would you have awakened him just to borrow a book?"

"I knew he read at night, and I fancied he might be awake, but there was no light showing. I was about to go

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TWO-PART NOVEL

moment when I heard David's voice.

"What did it say?"

Franklyn had cleared his throat, hesitated. I smiled encouragingly.

"Tell the court," the lawyer prompted.

I could hardly hear his reply: "The words were, 'Don't you see, Davy? We've got to use the poison.'"

"You are sure the words were, 'Don't you see, Davy'?"

"Quite sure."

"And, 'We've got to use the poison-knot?'"

"Yes."

"Doesn't that imply someone was speaking to Curtis?"

"It was David. He often talked to himself."

I called, "Go on, Franklyn, let them shoot Hobbs and the rest," and the judge reprimanded me. When I smiled it wasn't at him, of course. I was remembering what Claudine might have said with inimitable gravity, "The pris'ner will kindly be'ave 'oself."

When I got back to thinking of Franklyn he'd left the box, and Cynthia was there looking as peaked I fancied she could be having one of her bilious turns. She was in the heavy mourning she had worn at Aunt's funeral and answering their questions in a monotonous whine.

The cook, Franklyn had inherited Hildegard supplied the comic relief. A small, round woman of sixty-five, with a slightly lopsided face, she said she'd only worked for Mrs. Glass for three weeks and didn't know anything about the murder. The night Mrs. Glass was killed Miss Cynthia had given her a sleeping tablet, but she had dropped it and been unable to find it. But she'd seen and heard nothing, and, though they pestered her, she held her ground, and, in the end, they gave her up as a bad job.

Claudine had once asked me to tell her something of our household, but I had shied at focussing people as dull as Cynthia or as crude as Franklyn and so, inevitably, Celeste had come into the picture as a bizarre highlight. I think I must have described her rather minutely, because Claudine observed me with a whimsical shrewdness.

"She sounds as if in a livelier age she might have been the town romp," she said. "I bet her name's Spinks."

As it happened it was Celia Brown. We'd all fallen for her foreign accent and the romantic mystery of her origin in some outlandish Balkan State and the list of unmentionable experiences, and Cousin Franlyn had never tired of contrasting her appearance and her voice with those of Cynthia, who, poor soul, had never had any experiences at all.

The lawyer who followed Featherstone had been happily brief. I recall he discoursed on sudden waves of brain disturbance giving rise to impulsive action and the prompting of impish thought which was illuminating and very true.

It had been my intention to signal to Melita the syllables of through-the-looking-glass so she'd have no doubt that I remembered, but she seemed caught up by the words streaming from the lawyer, and when the judge began to talk she dabbed her lips with a tiny handkerchief and rolled it into a ball, loosened it and rolled it again in a nervous gesture which would have been quite foreign to Claudine.

Not till there was a stir in court and I had to descend the steps did she look at me. In the fleeting moment her lips signalled a word. Two syllables. I believed I had caught a "k" movement, but the second syllable eluded me. At the bottom of the steps it registered. The first syllable hadn't begun with k. It was hard c.

"Courage," I said aloud. "That was it."

Melita had told me to have courage; but that suggested that courage might be lacking, and I wasn't afraid because, whatever had happened, I am sure Claudine had never been afraid.

"I'm not afraid," I said as the Moustache brought me a mug of water. "I'm not even perturbed."

Featherstone was, though, when he came hurrying in. "I hope I've done right," he said. "I don't know whether you helped. The trouble is the jury has no idea of what's going on in that mind of yours." He shook his head in doleful recollection. "There was that old ruin with the feather in her hat." He broke off, reluctant to pursue the subject. "Well, it's in the laps of the gods."

I wanted to ask him what verdict he expected, but it wasn't fair to distress him. The man was sweating anxiety.

Melita, now I thought of it, had been distressed, and I was sorry for that. I found myself wanting to speak with her and that was strange, because, till then, I had believed I would never want to talk to another woman.

"There was a girl in court," I told Featherstone. "I wish you would bring her to see me. She's wearing a blue dress. Her first name's Melita."

"I can put it to her," he said doubtfully. "I'll bring her if she's agreeable."

Queerly, not till then had I realised the possibility of anyone I desired to see not reciprocating. In a few minutes I'd know whether the world was to remember me as an ogre who had strangled his ageing aunt. I should have been anxious, but I wasn't. I didn't feel the least guilty.

The Moustache called, "Beg pardon, Mr. Featherstone. They're coming in."

"So soon?" Featherstone avoided my eye but seized my hands and pressed them within his clammy palms. "Hope for the best," he said, and sailed from the room, gown floating.

When I stepped into the dock the jury was filing in.

Franklyn's brows were a straight black line. Cynthia was staring at her hands. Hildegard had come back into court and, like Celeste, with whom I had exchanged in all perhaps a score of words in my life, was awaiting the verdict with what looked like surprisingly little personal anxiety. One might have been deceived into thinking Melita slept but for the gentle tremble of her pale lips.

There was whispering at the lawyer's table, and the court was buzzing. The noise was beginning to irritate me. I looked questioningly at the judge, but he was staring at the jury box. And then I looked, too.

The woman with the outrageous feather in her hat wasn't there. There were only eleven of them.

One, a bald-headed man, arose, fiddling nervously with his watch chain. He was choked with emotion. "Your honor," he stammered, "I regret to report that one of the jury—Mrs. Roake—is no more. She dropped dead before we had come to a decision."

I tried to catch Melita's eye, but she was watching the judge listening to him dismissing the jury. Featherstone was at my elbow, whispering, "There'll be a new trial. I shall demand bail."

That meant I'd be free. Free to go where? Back to Warriewood, which I hated? Back to Franklyn and Cynthia? I wanted nothing of Franklyn and Cynthia. I said in a loud voice, "I don't want bail."

The judge said dryly, "Well, that disposes of one difficulty," and remanded me into my former custody to take my trial at the next sessions.

As the occupants of the Press table rushed off to whoop up headlines I found myself hoping Featherstone would succeed in inducing Melita to come to see me before they took me away. But I wasn't going to make any begging signal with my lips nor plea with my eyes. If she came it would have to be of her own free will.

Dr. Ellershaw, however, came first. He waved the Moustache into a corner. He had a way of taking your pulse as though it was a social matter. "You understood, Davy?"

"The part about being returned to custody? Oh, yes. They still think I killed Aunt Maly."

As he offered his cigarette case he said, "You'll be well looked after. I've spoken to Dr. Grostock and he'll call in on you every day. We wear the same school tie."

He perched himself on the edge of the table and picked up a sheet of paper I had discarded. "I've been writing to Claudine," I explained.

He appeared not to have heard but idly folded the paper. "It might be an idea while you're waiting for the new trial to write down all you know. Little things that have happened. It would occupy your time."

I was suspicious that he might be tricking me into promising to set down those things I never wanted to think of again. "I can't compose," I said.

"Oh, you never know till you try," he retorted lightly and grabbed for his watch. "I almost forgot Gravellini's show." He shook hands. "I'll be in touch, Davy boy." From the door he called, "Let me know if Peter turns up. Grostock will telephone any message."

The door closed, and I heard Featherstone's voice greeting him. The lawyer's words came booming. "How is he, Doctor? Is it all right for me to take this young lady in?"

I felt sorry for the poor man standing out there with Melita. He didn't quite believe in me and I suppose he was thinking it would never do to have his client strangle a visitor

★ ★ ★

Melita

Walking down the grey corridor, a tremulous pace behind the lawyer, I wondered what I would find to say to David. Wondered, too, what he would say to me. It would be a queer encounter after the long interval during which we had grown up. That he should have remembered me at all was surprising and yet, unmistakably, his lips had signalled my name and, in those momentous moments while the jury was deciding his fate, asked to see me.

But now David would have to go through all the terrible business again. How, at such a time, could there be a thought for one he had dragged fleetingly from a nebulous past?

For an instant I clutched at excuse. I wanted to fly back along the gloomy corridor and into the bright street that David might never see again. Our meeting could give him neither pleasure nor respite. And, doubtless, I would not be permitted to see him alone. What then was to be spoken between us in the presence of policemen?

The lawyer broke in. "Often he is quite calm."

In that sombre funnel his voice was as startling as a shout in a funeral parlor. I felt we should have been tiptoeing, but our heels were clacking on the stone flagging. A policeman yawned aloud, bored with the familiarity of things which made headlines, and stood aside as a door behind him opened. A man came toward me.

"Hello, Doctor," Mr. Featherstone greeted. "How is he? Is it all right for me to take this young lady in?"

The doctor's voice had a likeable restraint and his eyes smiled at me. "You are an old friend?"

Mr. Featherstone hastened to introduce us—Miss Winsor, Dr. Ellershaw—and I told how I had been out of touch with David for years but we had played together as children. I explained how, in court, he had remembered me and had asked Mr. Featherstone to bring me to see him. "But that was before he was remanded," I faltered.

"Oh, I think he will wish to see you all right." Dr. Ellershaw suggested to Mr. Featherstone that he go ahead and prepare his client, and, when the barrister had gone, surprised me by asking, "Do you remember much of your playtime with David?"

I said I remembered very well indeed because at Warriewood we had played the games I enjoyed most.

He appeared interested. "Franklyn Greene was one of Davy's companions?"

"I'd hardly say that," I said. "They are so different."

He nodded understandingly. "And Cynthia Warren?"

"She was older."

"Can you recollect any other friends, Miss Winsor?"

I thought back. In the later years of my mother's life she had frequently spoken of "little David." She had attended the same school as his mother. Often she referred to the wicked fate that had robbed Davy of his father when he was two and forced his mother into the uncongenial atmosphere of her sister-in-law's home.

I remembered David's aunt as a forbidding personality and immensely old, though, of course, she couldn't have been. I had found her frigidly polite, and I was invariably timid and shy in her presence.

But David's soft and smiling mother I had loved, and my last sight of her—a princess coming to kiss me good-night before she fled to a fairy ball—clung to memory. At her throat was a diamond and emerald pendant and she had leaned over my cot and let me touch it. "It's for the girl Davy will some day marry," she said, and I'd gone to sleep thinking how nice David was and how grand it would be to grow up and marry him and wear such a lovely thing.

My mother's words came to me. "Poor Davy, he'll have no one to play with." And then I remembered.

"It may sound stupid, Doctor, but I do recall another of David's playmates. David insisted on him joining in our games, but actually he had no existence. He was an invisible playmate."

"Peter?"

It gave me a shock to hear the name jolted from the past. "That was it," I told him. "David really believed he was there."

He considered me gravely. "And you? Did you let Davy think you believed in Peter?"

"Yes, because I hated to hurt him, especially when Franklyn guyed him."

"You would like to help Davy, Miss Winsor?"

"Of course." It sounded so inadequate.

He said softly, "David believes Peter killed Mrs. Glass."

"Oh, no——" I hesitated on the edge of horrid conjecture. David, believing he was Peter, doing a dreadful deed to avenge a fancied slight. All I could find was to say, "Peter was just an invisible playmate when he was a little boy."

He sighed. "Peter was born of loneliness. He lingered because David continued to be lonely. I don't know for how long and at what intervals David has enjoyed this false friendship, but I have learned that at one recent stage Peter just ceased to be. David didn't need him. He'd found a real playmate."

My mind was teeming with the evidence produced in court. "But it must have been Peter he was talking to when Franklyn Greene overheard him. And you say he thinks Peter did it."

"David is intelligent," Ellershaw said gravely. "Certain indisputable facts he acknowledges. The murder weapon had been seen in his room by the maid; unfortunate words were overheard by Franklyn; prints of his slippers had been made in powder spilled by his aunt's bed. But David believes it was Peter's slip-knot, that they were Peter's words, and that Peter was wearing his shoes. I think we would find, if he could be brought to describe Peter, he would be another David."

He sighed. "Perhaps that's why Featherstone didn't bring up the matter of the invisible playmate. Every word they'd have got from David would have convinced the jury of his guilt."

"Doctor," I said, "he thinks Peter did that awful thing, but he doesn't shudder at it."

He shrugged slim shoulders. "Peter, after all, is an apparition and it is not unusual for the percipient of a genuine hallucination to behave toward it differently to the way he would regard the reality." His smile dispelled the pedantry. "Perhaps," he went on, "I can explain better by telling you I once had a patient who fancied he was followed by a lion but was not in the least frightened."

His eyes considered the door before which the policeman was standing. He said a little sadly, "No one but you has come to see the boy. It was kind of you—and brave."

"I feel so helpless," I told him. "I can't believe what they say. Why," I struggled on, "David wouldn't even step on an ant. I just know it, Doctor. David wouldn't kill anything."

"If he did it, he doesn't know it," he said.

The door behind the policeman was opening and Dr. Ellershaw said hurriedly, "I think I could arrange for you to see Davy from time to time if you had the inclination."

I was filled with a word. "If . . ." Perhaps it had been spoken carelessly. Perhaps I'd been mistaken in thinking there had been the slightest emphasis. "Doctor, you said if Davy did it!"

He pressed my hand. "Goodbye. Go and see David." In a whisper he added, "Any time, if you think you should, come and see me."

Mr. Featherstone called, "You may go in now, Miss Winsor," and, unexpectedly tactful, "I'll wait outside."

David was standing on the far side of the room. Except that he flung his cigarette to the floor and set his foot on it rather dramatically, he made no movement and I had to cross the floor and put out my hand.

"David."

He took it slowly and held it while his eyes roved my face. I was ashamed that I felt an instant of fear, especially ashamed when he began pouring out words.

"Don't feel sorry for me, Melita. I'm all right. Quite all right. Dr. Ellershaw's been here. He's a friend called Grostock. Everything's going to be fine. What a long, long time since I saw you! Do you remember how we played together in the attic room? I slept in it the night Aunt Maly was killed." He nodded to the dock above. "They're making a mistake up there, you know. I didn't kill her."

"Of course not, David."

"Oh, you mustn't blame them. I suppose sometimes things sounded pretty ghastly. And old Franklyn thinking he heard me say that about the slip-knot! That was Peter talking. Don't you remember? Franklyn heard him when he came up to borrow one of my books." A frown of perplexity chased the boyishness from his face, and then he asked, "You remember Peter?"

"I remember him, David." I was near to crying, but I made a sound like a laugh as I quoted, "'Do you suppose the walrus said——' Oh, David, don't you remember I told you to whisper to Peter if he forgot?"

His dark eyes twinkled, and then he actually laughed aloud. The ache in my throat was agony.

He gave me an impish grin. "Don't look now," he said, "but there's a walrus close behind you."

I knew at once he meant the warder, and I managed a smile and a nod. I said I had seen it when I came in.

"Claudine would have said a moustache like that couldn't possibly be genuine," he grinned. I had never heard of Claudine and was wondering whom she might be when the fluttering frown that aged him instantly came again.

"You're not a bit like her," he said. "You don't resemble her in the least and yet I like you." His eyes blinked in puzzlement. "That's strange, isn't it?"

"One day perhaps you will tell me all about her."

That was a mistake because he said, "No!" with such violence that the warder stirred. "I'm not going to tell anyone," he almost shouted. "Ellershaw wants me to write it down, but I shan't." He looked at me sharply, "You're trying to pump me."

"No, no, Davy, I just like talking to you," I hurried on. "If you'll let me, we'll talk of other things. Books, perhaps. Pictures. You always wanted to paint. Do you?"

"A little." He had simmered down, but was regarding me suspiciously. "If you come you won't bring Franklyn or Cynthia?"

"No— Just myself."

"I never know what to say to Cynthia," he said. "Nor Franklyn." Puzzled wrinkles found their way between his eyes. "I can't think which of my books he could have wanted."

"Don't think about it, David," I begged.

"You're right, Melita. It's quite unimportant." His eyes roved the bare room. "Yes—come and see me as often as you wish. Claudine comes often. She was here this morning." His eyes went over me again as if, at that moment, he was seeing me for the first time. "Claudine wished I could meet some nice girl about my own age. Do you suppose she meant someone like you?"

"I hope so, Davy."

"Yes, that would explain." He was regarding me with such critical candor that I was embarrassed. "No, you're not the least like her," he announced at length and turned his back and whispered, "Claudine," and again, "Claudine!"

The warder touched my arm. "Better go now, Miss."

I think I also whispered, "Good-bye for now, Davy." He neither turned nor spoke.

I wanted very much to know about Claudine, but the lawyer was in a hurry and, presently, had escorted me from the court precincts. I felt that, in his heart, he believed David had murdered Mrs. Glass but had not been responsible for his actions.

In all those awful minutes,

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THE CURIOUS CRIME

while the jury was deliberating, I myself had had to fight against the feeling that an acquittal was hopeless and had prayed for the lesser of two horrible alternatives.

I thought of the evidence Featherstone had had to combat and, added to the damning items regretfully enumerated by Dr. Ellershaw, the testimony of Cynthia Warren, who, with every show of reluctance, had repeated the angry outburst she had overheard when David came from his aunt's room on the night of her death.

I tried to set myself, a stranger, in the jury box. What could I have found in David's favor? The words Cynthia overheard had not been denied. Indeed, the police evidence was that David had admitted to being angry with Mrs. Glass but wouldn't say why, and couldn't remember what he said.

But, apart from that altercation, the crime seemed motiveless. Unless you could argue that David had in some way penetrated the secrecy of his aunt's will. There had been no evidence that that was so. It hadn't been shown that he was hungry for money nor in need of it. Featherstone, indeed, had made much of the fact that David had told Mrs. Glass he wanted to get along without her help.

Poor stuff in rebuttal. And yet I couldn't believe. I couldn't see David rising to make grim search for the slip-knot, nor creeping furtively downstairs to strangle a sick old woman.

And yet, what had I to go on but a blind hunch fortified by a doctor's slight emphasis. "If David did it."

What was prompting my belief in David's innocence? Why was I thinking, as I walked heedless of direction, not so much of David's dark future as of the woman to whom I had heard him call in a whisper? The woman who hadn't even stood by him in his hour of trial. Claudine. What was Claudine to me?

There came, flashing and stabbing, a thought so preposterous, so incredible in its personal implication that I couldn't admit its truth. Not for a moment. Such things simply didn't happen.

Presently, I told myself, my steps keeping pace to the flurry of thought, I would go away and forget all about the case and David sitting in his cell wondering, perhaps, why I didn't come as I had promised.

I had my own life to live. For the first time I was my own mistress and could make my own decisions. I wouldn't be shackled.

A policeman called sharply, waving me to the kerb. I had stepped out against the lights. When I turned my eye caught the sign, Cafe of the Cross Roads. I went in.

After I had ordered I asked to be directed to the phone. I simply had to speak to Dr. Ellershaw and, when he learned my name, he came on at once. "I've seen Davy," I told him breathlessly. "Doctor — he's strange."

"Didn't you expect that, Miss Winsor?"

I had to know. "Doctor — can he—will he ever be cured?" I went on in a rush. "I've got to know, Doctor. It's most dreadfully important."

He said carefully, "I have made many inquiries and, until a few weeks ago, he seems to have been a perfectly happy and normal young man. He has had a shock, but it is surprising what the nervous system will tolerate and how quickly and readily it will recuperate. David needs understanding and sympathy. A great deal of someone's patience."

I imagined him holding the receiver waiting for me to tell him why the matter had become so urgent when, but a short time back, I had explained that I hadn't seen David for years. When I didn't speak he asked, "Will you be seeing him again, Miss Winsor?"

"Yes—I think so. I don't know. Perhaps he would rather see someone else. Someone he knows better." My face was flaming, but I couldn't forbear asking, "Doctor—who is Claudine?"

"He mentioned her?"

"He talked a great deal about her."

There was a brief pause before he said, "Claudine was Mrs. Clanmorgan. Does that explain anything?"

"No."

"The papers were full of her a month or so ago. But I would rather you read of it and formed your own conclusions."

AGAIN there came that brief hesitation, then Dr. Ellershaw added, "David imagines he sees Claudine."

"Imagines?" I queried.

"Mrs. Clanmorgan is dead, Miss Winsor."

Claudine dead! I didn't know how, but she no longer existed for David except in his mind. She could never be anything to him but a memory, and memory faded. I tried to repress a sense of hateful jubilation.

The doctor was saying, "Did I understand you to say you would be seeing Davy again?"

"Yes," I said eagerly. "Often. I will see him as often as I am permitted."

"You may be on common ground if you talk to him of painting. Do you know anything of contemporary art?"

"A little," I said, hardly hearing, "but I will read up. Good-bye, Doctor, and thank you, thank you." Now the shackles were removed. There was no rival. I was in love with a man I believed in. The doctor had said David needed sympathy and understanding and I could give it. It was my destiny and privilege to fight for him. I went back to the table, wiping a tear. The waitress had not yet brought my order and, sitting on the chair I had vacated, was the maid, Celeste, who had discovered the body of Mrs. Emily Glass.

Her indifferent glance assured me she hadn't recognised me as anyone who had been in court and, while I stood hesitating with the shock of seeing her, she waved languidly. "Seats are free," she said. "Warm a pew."

It sounded as if she might not be averse to gossip. I murmured a quick thank-you and explained I had been telephoning but had already ordered tea.

"Mine's tea, too, though I deserve a man's drink," she said as I sat. She assessed me shrewdly as I settled my handkerchief and pulled off my gloves, not missing the trace of tears. "What's the matter?" she asked. "Man trouble?"

At any other time I would have shied, but this Celeste was a finger-post on the path I had chosen. Who could tell which way she would point? Dumbly I let her believe she had hit the nail on the head.

"Believe me," she said, "there's not one of 'em worth a cracker. Oh, all right for a bit of fun if you keep your eyes peeled, but . . ." Tea and scones interrupted and, when the waitress departed, I sniffed, and Celeste went on with rough kindness.

"Forget him." She shuffled her chair closer. "Now I've just had an experience, but I wouldn't say it's left me blue. When your applecart's upset, the sooner you pick up the fruit the better." She offered the sugar bowl, and when I refused dropped two lumps into her cup. "I'll pay for this," she prophesied. "I'm the kind that runs to fat. I'll have to make my alley good before I lose my charm."

"I'm sure it will be a long time before that becomes a possibility." I thought it might, too, because she was nice-looking in a bold, moving picture sort of way.

She gave me an ironic salute. "Just the same I'm laying foundations while I'm in my first blush," she said. "I don't want any woman telling me I look marvellous for my age. If I get what I'm after I won't care a hoot what anyone thinks."

I smiled timidly. "And just what are you after?"

"Security," she said, her mouth hardening. "Long ago I made up my mind the only thing that mattered was money. Once you've got something solid in the bank you're set." A reminiscent gleam came as she stirred her tea. "I remember my ma. Every week trying harder and harder. Fighting a losing battle. Going grey worrying over new wrinkles and extra avoirdupois. And just to hold on to a meal ticket who, in the end, walked off with a hotsy-totsy not much older than me and I but fifteen!"

She lifted smouldering eyes. "Oh, he wasn't my father, but he brought home the bacon and after he left it was tough. I made up my mind that what happened to ma wouldn't happen to me." She set her spoon in the saucer. "Listen to me yapping and you probably well fixed," she said, and, as her eyes rested on my right hand, the bitterness vanished and they positively danced.

"I'm a working girl," I told her. "At least I hope to be."

"With diamonds like those?"

The ring had been my mother's and something I should have kept for formal occasions, but, in the rush of moving, I had found no safer place for it than my finger. I said, "You mustn't imagine I can live up to this ring. It's an heirloom."

"You could get a packet for it," she said.

"Happily, I don't have to," I told her. "I've enough to keep me going till I land a job, but I'm not greatly experienced. I wouldn't last a week in an office. In a dentist's rooms, perhaps."

"You don't belong here?"

"No."

"What brought you to a dump like this?"

"Oh, I wouldn't call it a dump," I said. "I like small towns, and parts of it are quite pretty." And, indeed, it had lived up to my childhood memories. I'd found comfort in the lack of crowds and dawdling pedestrians and, in the wide, tree-lined streets, a drowsy peacefulness until one morning it had been shattered by a newsboy's cry and headlines revealing that I'd come back to find the one person I remembered with affection standing trial for a ghastly murder.

"After my mother's death there were no relatives and no one I cared for enough to hold me," I told Celeste. "It had to be somewhere."

"Perhaps you're right," she admitted doubtfully. "I guess the town isn't so important as the house you live in. The one where I worked was first cousin to a morgue. And only two wage-plugs beside myself — a kid who come in by the day and goggled at me as if I'd escaped from a cat house and a cook who wasn't exactly a ray of sunshine." She shrugged. "Anyway, I'm not there now. I got the push."

"You don't appear to be upset."

"I put it down to experience. I was a lady's maid. I got the idea from a film. I kidded I was foreign, and the old dame I worked for liked that because she thought I couldn't read English. She was scared someone might look over her shoulder." A chuckle escaped her. "I even used an accent."

"But why?" I asked. "You're attractive enough as you are."

Again she treated me to her ironic bow. "I wanted to break with the old gang," she confessed, "so I changed my name and nationality and came here. And then a smart Aleck loomed from the past and the balloon went up." Her forehead wrinkled in inquiry. "Don't tell me you haven't read the reports of the Curtis case?"

It was an effort to say calmly, "I've just come here. What was the Curtis case?"

"A murder trial. I was a witness. Celeste Czermak, but I turned out to be Celia Brown."

She shot me a challenging glance, wondering how I was taking the deception. I said, "It must have been terrible for you."

"Curtis was charged with killing his aunt—the old lady I worked for. One of the jurywomen got over-excited and dropped dead, so they've got to go all over it again. But I don't think he'll get chokee-o. He's all set for the looney-bin."

My fingers went taut as I buttered a scone, but I hung on to myself. "Curtis? What was he like? Old?"

"Good lord, no. It happened on his twenty-first. He slept in the room next to mine and I had to tell how he groaned in nightmare. You'll get it all with the morning paper."

I said, "I'll have to read it up. Did you say you slept in the next room?"

"Oh, I wasn't scared on Curtis' account," she told me. "He never gave me a look. And, believe me, you couldn't say that for some others in the house." She gathered her gloves. "I must be toddling. Hope you find that job."

"Thank you. And you, I hope you'll get another soon."

She flicked my shoulder with her glove. "Don't bother your head about me, sweetie. Being a lady's maid teaches you to keep your eyes open. You don't have a chance to say much, but you hear plenty. I'll be all right. I've irons in the fire."

I hated to let her go; and then, as the saying is, she put it in my lap. After obvious consideration, she asked, "Have you found anywhere to lay your head?"

I said cautiously, "I'm at the Gardner, but it's pricy." Actually it wasn't and, as I had hoped, it encouraged her to make a suggestion with which she had been toying.

It exceeded my wildest hopes. She said, "You could have a slice of my apartment at the Golquin. We'd have to share a scream of a bathroom, but there's a wooden partition dividing the rest, so you could keep to yourself if you're choosy. It's clean and cheap, and the landlady minds her own business. We might be company for each other; that is, unless you think you should read up on the Curtis case first. If I talk of it, it might give you the creeps."

"I'm sure it wouldn't do that," I said so impulsively I had to break it down. "My life has been so placid I rather think you'll find me a bore."

She brushed that aside. "At the Golquin I'm registered as Judith Asherton." Her grin was impish. "I'm a bird for changing my name, aren't I? But I didn't want publicity."

I told her I could understand that. I said, "Suppose I come round after dinner to-night?"

"I'll be waiting," she agreed. "And just so you know the whole book, I didn't give up being Celia Brown because of anything I'd get ten years for. After what happened to ma, I got to running round in wrong company. The worst that happened was finger-printing and a suspended sentence."

I smiled at her. "I'll take a chance, Celeste."

She squeezed my shoulder. "You're all right, kid," she said. "Lock up your diamond ring."

When I left the cafe, I walked to the library and looked up the newspaper files. Within five minutes I came upon the screaming headlines, and the faces of David's Claudine and her husband looked at me from a framework of newsprint.

I thought Mrs. Clanmorgan appealing rather than beautiful. The eyes were whimsical and there was a Puckish twist to the lips. Clanmorgan's eyes held a hint of ruthlessness, but it was not a studio picture and I felt it had been taken in one of his unguarded moments.

With the Clanmorgans I could sympathise but impersonally. Their tragedy didn't touch me except in so far as it concerned David, and, though I plodded through columns of journalistic conjecture, I couldn't find a single mention of him.

David's conversation and the implication of Ellershaw's hesitant words suggested that there was some link, however, and, walking through the dusk, I wondered whether Celeste would fill the gaps. If there were any gaps. Wasn't it possible Claudine had been no more than David's great friend? Her appalling death might well have temporarily unbalanced the mind of one who had known her intimately.

I balked at the word and brushed the picture of Mrs. Clanmorgan from my thoughts and began to think of Celeste. What had I got from her during our brief meeting? What was I likely to get in closer association?

David had never given her a look, she had said, but she wouldn't say that for some others in the house. That, of course, was a careless way of putting it, because, apart from David, there was only one man living on the premises. David's cousin, Franklyn Greene.

* * *

Franklyn

A week before Aunt Maly's death I came upon Cynthia tuned into the racing at Belpark! I wouldn't have been more surprised if I'd found the Archbishop of Canterbury listening to the Andrews Sisters.

She looked a bit guilty. "Why, I didn't know the geegees were one of your vices," I said.

If anything as sallow as Cynthia could get up a color, she had it. "I just thought I'd hear the Guineas run," she stammered. "I knew you had an investment and I hoped your horse would win."

It didn't ring true, but it was possible. Since Aunt Maly had grown so sick and was sticking to her bed, breakfast conversation had been uncensored.

I'd grinned at Cynthia. I'd said, "If Creosote pulls off the Guineas I'll be over the hills and far away by nightfall. Better be prepared to come to the aerodrome and see me fly out of your life."

Cynthia blurted out, "You're not really serious, Franklyn?"

"Never more," I told her, and meant it.

But Creosote didn't come home, and, as I switched off after listening to the race description, I suppose I wasn't looking exactly pleased. I scowled at Cynthia and surprised a curious expression. It vanished at once, but not before I was certain of one thing. It wasn't disappointment. I couldn't make up my mind what it was before, without comment, she took herself off.

The morning Aunt Maly made the headlines I was lying in bed, having my first cigarette for the day, when a tap came and Celeste called "Franklyn . . . come quick! It is Madame."

I have to admire the cheek of her—that, even under those circumstances, she should stick to her phony accent. I got out of bed and put on my dressing-gown, and, when I opened the door, there she was as startling as a wax mannequin.

When she had given me the news I said, "All right. I'll go and look for myself. Give me a couple of minutes, then wake David and break it to Cynthia."

My aunt's room was on the ground floor because, of late years, she'd shied at the climbing, and I went down and opened her door and shut myself in with what was left of her. I'd guessed it would be the picture you'd choose to look at in the first light of morning, and it was worse than I'd anticipated. I kept my eyes averted and had a good look at about the room. That paid a dividend, for almost at once I came on the pendant and the note from David's mother.

"David, dear, it is your 21st birthday and this pendant is my loving gift. As I write you are a wistful little fellow of eight, too young to know or care about values and perhaps you have long since forgotten how I used to say a princess would walk into your life and you would marry her and on your wedding day, she would wear my pendant.

"Thirteen years have passed and your Aunt Maly, God willing, will explain my foolish whim that she should keep my gift secret until this great day in your life.

"Dear David, I hope it is a very happy day and that my pendant has been a grand surprise. I hope you will find the lovely girl you wish to wear it, darling David, and together you will have such fun.

"Mother."

The sticky sentiment made it plain as a pikestaff. Only Aunt Maly knew about the pendant. And Aunt Maly was past telling.

When I went into the hall Cynthia was on the stairway in her dressing-gown, her mousy hair screwed into an untidy bob and looking a hundred per cent. hag. David was on the landing behind her. He was bare-footed and in pyjamas. Celeste stood near him peering down.

They stood motionless and silent, watching me close the bedroom door and turn the key in the old-fashioned lock. I surprised me that I could speak so calmly. I said, "Aunt Maly has been murdered."

Cynthia made as though she had been struck a blow, and Celeste, with her usual competence, pushed past David. I think she thought Cynthia was going to faint.

David came slowly down the stairs. "Did you say—murdered?" His eyes were puzzled and troubled.

Cynthia called hysterically, "She was strangled!" and I realised Celeste hadn't swallowed the pill. David didn't appear to realise the significance of her words, but, when they penetrated, burst out, "No. Oh, no, no," and came down to their level at a bound, bringing up sharply when I barred his way. For a few seconds our eyes held, our faces inches apart.

"You in particular must stay out, David," I said. He didn't ask why but his eyes wavered and he sat down on the stairs, his head in his hands.

I dropped the key of Aunt's room into the pocket of my gown and went to the phone and rang the police. When I came into the hall again Cynthia and Celeste had gone, but David was still on the stairs, his elbows on his knees, making little mooning noises as he rocked.

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through his hair. That was how Inspector Hack found him.

I'd admitted the police—a stocky, middle-aged inspector with an untidy moustache, a plain sergeant, and a couple of experts — and introduced myself. I indicated David. "That is my cousin, Mr. Curtis."

David didn't look up and, after a moment's curious regard, Inspector Hack asked me whether I had made the discovery that Mrs. Glass was dead.

"No," I told him. "My aunt's maid went to her room and . . .

"When?"

"A few minutes ago. She called me and I phoned you at once."

"You've seen the body, Mr. Greene?"

"Naturally."

"Touch anything?"

"Certainly not. I didn't go near the bed. There's some powder spilled on the floor. I came out as soon as I realised she was past help and locked the door."

"That was efficient." He took the key I produced. "Besides you and your cousin there, who is in the house?"

"Celeste the maid; Hildegard the cook, and Cynthia Warren. There is another domestic, but she sleeps out."

"Does Miss Warren know what has happened?"

"I told her. She's gone upstairs to her room."

He nodded to the sergeant. "Get her."

"She'll be very upset," I prompted. "She'll not be dressed."

"It isn't a mannequin parade," he said.

Celeste appeared on the stairs behind David, trim as they come, with her white cap and apron over neat black and looking neither to right nor left as she came down, heedless apparently of the appreciative stare of the good-looking young sergeant.

The inspector was inserting the key in Aunt's door but eyeing Celeste. "You acted as maid to Mrs. Glass?"

"Oui."

He raised his thick eyebrows. To him anything foreign would be suspicious. "French?"

"Rumanian." She shrugged delicately. "I have a few words of French."

He grunted, nodding at the door. "You discovered the body?"

"Oui, m'sieur."

"I'd like you to come in with me. Mind?"

She made no demur, and he turned the key in the lock, and they went in. The door closed.

A few minutes later Cynthia came downstairs, her head high, one hand nervously massaging the thin knuckles of the other.

It was like her to go to the hardest and straightest chair in the hall and sit bolt upright. The sergeant, lolling against the balustrade, seemed hypnotised. Nobody spoke and I smoked furiously, waiting for the door of Aunt's room to reopen.

It seemed decades before Celeste came out, and, at once, the sergeant snapped his fingers and confronted her. "Well, well," he said. "Look who's here!"

She flashed him a glance and, neatly avoiding him, walked away, and he watched her progress, smiling. Hack, coming from the bedroom, followed his gaze. "That's the deceased's maid, Celeste," he said. "She's Rumanian."

"You don't say!" The sergeant began to whistle a corny tune they'd just revamped, "Celia, I Want To Stealya."

David sprang to his feet, his eyes angry, shouting, "Stop whistling that tune. I won't have it."

If he'd said "Stop whistling," I'd have put it down to deafness. The sergeant had been tactless and he acknowledged it with an apologetic shrug. But I was puzzled because I felt that David was raving against the tune, not the breach of manners.

Inspector Hack said smoothly, "Suppose, Curtis, you come and have a look at the body?"

It sounded like a challenge, and David's refusal was violent. "I like to remember people alive," he cried, and then, as if talking to himself and unable to believe what he was saying, "I saw her dead. It was terrible."

I didn't have time to work that out because the inspector chose to make the moment dramatic. He'd kept one hand behind his back and suddenly he flung it out so that the cord he held by the extreme end dangled a couple of inches before David's eyes. The lower extremity was looped into a slip-knot.

"Ever see this?" he demanded.

David shrank from the cord. His lips moved, but no words came, and Hack roared again. "Well? Either you have or haven't. Which is it?"

"I've seen it," David said at last. His voice was pretty thin.

Hack held back a grin. "As a matter of fact it belongs to you. Isn't that so?"

"No," David said. "It doesn't belong to me."

"Supposing I told you the maid Celeste saw it hanging in your room." The inspector was grimly jocular. "You wouldn't give a lady the lie, would you?"

"No," David said. "She'd be telling the truth."

"But you say it's not yours?"

"Yes." He looked far from happy.

"Then to whom does it belong?" Hack demanded. When he got no answer he shook the dangling cord so that it danced. "For whom were you holding it?" he shouted.

David's long fingers rubbed his forehead. "It's no use. If I told you, you wouldn't believe!" he said. "If you don't mind, I'd rather not talk of it."

Hack's laugh was a bark. "I bet you would." He thrust the cord into his pocket. "But I like talking. We'll go up to your room and have quite a gossip. But first, you're sure you don't want to take a peep in there?" His thumb jerked in the direction of Aunt Maly's body.

David shook his head violently. "No. I told you. I don't want to see the dead."

"And it isn't long since you saw someone dead, is it?" the inspector said softly and then roared, "Who was it?"

David pulled a handkerchief from the pocket of his pyjamas and wiped the sweat from his forehead.

"He hasn't been well lately," I explained.

"It don't take long to answer a straight question," Hack insisted. "All I want to know, and from his own lips, is when he last saw someone dead and who it was. Well, Curtis?"

"I won't talk," David cried desperately. "I'm never going to talk about it. Not now or ever. I want to remember her alive." He clutched his head with a crazy gesture. "I wish you wouldn't bother me," he cried.

In the instant of official astonishment I was aware of the zoom of an approaching aeroplane. David heard too, for his head lifted, and I am sure the group about him had been forgotten as he stood listening with extraordinary intentness. The plane was flying uncomfortably low and, as it passed, the roar of the engines became deafening, and David covered his ears, spun in a half-circle, clutched at the newel, missed and, but for the sergeant, would have fallen.

A distant bell rang harshly and continued. "What's that?" Hack snapped.

I explained it was the alarm clock of Hildegard, our cook. After all it wasn't yet seven. I told him her room was at the end of a passage on the first floor and round the corner from Cynthia's and mine. David occupied a room adjoining Celeste's in what was actually the attic.

Cynthia had made no move to give any womanly assistance to David, but the sergeant was proving efficient. The inspector would have gone on questioning David had not the police doctor arrived and, after some fussing, advised that he be taken to his room. The sergeant helped him up the stairs, and the inspector followed the doctor into Aunt Maly's room. I waited in the hall, growing increasingly irritated by Cynthia's silence.

When Hack emerged he said, "Sorry to have bothered you both so soon. You can run along, Miss Warren, and get dressed." He added that he'd talk to us later so I went upstairs, shaved and dressed leisurely and descended to the breakfast-room. Cynthia was already there, but neither of us found anything to say, and presently Celeste came in.

She darted a questioning look at me and shrugged at Cynthia's back. "Those gendarmes! 'ow they ask and ask. But now I zink they 'ave everything fix."

Cynthia's head turned slowly. "What do you mean by that?"

"I 'ear her through the wall of my chambre," Celeste told her. "David don't speak excep' 'e says 'e don't kill Madame."

I looked at the tip of my cigarette. "And they don't believe him, eh, Celeste?"

"How should I know what's in a copper's mind?" she said with such unexpected tartness that it was that, as much as her sudden abandonment of accent, which startled me. But Cynthia was apparently too preoccupied with the thing that had made Warriewood news to notice anything but the hint of insolence.

"That will be all, Celeste," she said. It was a feeble stab at the role of mistress.

"O.K." Celeste was quite composed. "I just thought you'd like to hear the news. When they kept at him, David said if he'd killed anyone he didn't remember. They suggested he might have done it in his sleep, and David said like a lamb, 'If I did, I wouldn't know.' They think he's nuts." I couldn't be sure whether she was addressing one or both of us when she continued, "Shall I tell Hildegard you're furnished or have you lost your appetite for breakfast?"

She didn't wait for an answer, and Cynthia said, "She's impertinent. She'll have to go."

I didn't want it played that way. Celeste had always been an intriguing bundle. Now, though I knew she was a phony and that for some reason she didn't care whether we knew it or not, I still couldn't lose interest. If she went I'd miss her.

Hildegard's cumbrous figure appeared. One side of her face was swollen with the toothache she'd been grousing about for the past week, intensifying her air of sullen stupidity.

She gave me ham and eggs and served cereal to Cynthia, who absently poured cream and stirred the mess with an idle spoon. She said, "When will they take her away?"

"Soon, I think. They must be about through." There had been new arrivals—fingerprint and camera men, I suppose—and, from the room a few doors away across the hall came the sound of small movements and the murmur of voices. Someone whistled a bar of "Celia" and, abruptly, Cynthia pushed her plate from her and rose.

Hildegard said, "I bain bring you something to your room, Miss Cynthia."

She refused at first, then said, "Some coffee then. Strong, please."

Hildegard gathered the untouched cereal as Inspector Hack breezed in, sniffing appreciatively.

"I suppose it wouldn't be against regulations if we had our chat while breakfasting together," I suggested diplomatically. I gave Hildegard her orders and she went out, none too pleased, and, as the inspector settled his bulk, I asked how things fared with David. Should I send up his breakfast?

"I'm afraid that young man will have a very poor appetite just now," he said, sombrely thumbing over a grubby notebook. "Now, let's see. You're a nephew of deceased? Cousin of Miss Warren, I understand?"

TWO-PART NOVEL

I GATHERED that the inspector was thinking it an unusual set-up — three cousins in the one household. He became elaborately casual. "All of you fond of the old lady, I've no doubt?"

"She brought us up but she wasn't one to let anybody get fond of her," I admitted. "I don't suppose you'll find any of us hanging crepe on the door-knocker." His eyebrows skied at that. "Don't get me wrong," I went on. "Aunt was all right in her way but she'd forgotten that there is such a thing as youth, though we had nothing to grumble about really. She made me an allowance. David, too, until he went highhat and refused the dole."

"And Miss Warren?"

"You'll have to ask her about that." Cynthia could be as tight-lipped as her aunt, and I'd never found out how often or how deeply she dipped into the treasury.

Hack rubbed his chin. "Regarding your cousin David, Mr. Greene? If he refused his allowance how did he live? I understand he has no regular job."

"My dear old Inspector, David's a genius," I said. "Geniuses don't accept jobs. He paints. Not houses. Green meadows with cows destined for immortality."

He grunted. "But does he sell his pictures?"

"Here and there, perhaps." David was secretive about his talent, if any. "After he's dead people will fight to buy his works. Meanwhile he's got a studio conveniently over a restaurant and replete with easels and brushes and a major-domo to clean up. The major-domo's name is Walter, if it's important."

He wrote laboriously. "And how does he pay this Walter if he doesn't sell his paintings till after he's dead?" he inquired solemnly.

"Davy has a small income from his mother's estate. So you see, Inspector, he wouldn't need money desperately enough to kill anyone if that's what's on your mind. And, if you talk to Aunt Maly's doctor, you'll find that, if David strangled her, he was being frightfully premature. We'd all been warned she might conk out at any hour." I hesitated, thinking of possibilities. "Of course she might have left him her entire fortune, if that gives you anything to chew upon."

"Why him in particular?" he asked. "You and Miss Warren were equally close relatives."

I shrugged. None knew better than I how our late aunt tinkered with her will. It was the old thing's only pastime if you omit patience. I told the inspector quite frankly that none of us ever knew where we stood with my aunt, and I, for one, wouldn't be in the least surprised if she'd left her money to found a home for cats.

Hildegard arrived with a plate of ham and eggs and shoved it before him and he put away his notebook and rubbed his hands.

"I bain glad some can eat," Hildegard said pointedly and swept out.

It didn't ruffle him but he glanced meaningly at my empty plate. "This unhappy affair doesn't appear to have affected your appetite, if I may say so, Mr. Greene."

I carefully broke the ash of my cigarette. "I learned at school the ancient Greeks avoided worry by imagining a greater one," I said.

"You think there could be a worse worry than the murder of your aunt?"

"Certainly," I said easily. "Someone might have murdered me. I was equally handy."

"You're not worrying overmuch about His Nibs upstairs then?" he asked at last.

"David? I'm not my cousin's keeper."

He reached for the mustard. "Bad blood between you?"

"Not a bit of it," I scoffed. "It's just that David and I don't click. Never did, not even as kids. Now we're men of the world we're still poles apart. David simply isn't interested in the things that amuse me."

He broke a piece of toast. "Such as——?"

"Well—the horses."

He stuck his own knife into the butter. "Women?"

I guessed how his mind was working. He'd been hurling questions at David and was satisfied my booky cousin had choked our aunt, but he wanted from me something more than he'd got from Davy. A motive he could get his official fangs into.

"Sorry to disappoint," I said. "But I don't think David's any Lothario."

Surprisingly he said, "He was sleeping next door to a pretty sprightly piece."

"If this wasn't a house of death I'd laugh out loud," I said. "David's ethics would shy at an intrigue with his aunt's maid."

The smug respectability of my cousin was one of the things about him which irritated me. His resemblance to Claudine Clanmorgan in this respect had struck me the night she brushed me off. That had happened a month after the cocktail party where I'd first met her. I hadn't caught her name at the moment of introduction, but I couldn't get her out of my mind and I made it my immediate business to find out all I could regarding her.

Someone pointed out her husband, a big fellow with square shoulders and spry eyes, standing glass in hand, the centre of a ring of men, and doing most of the talking. Clanmorgan had little claim to looks and, in that first glimpse, I thought him fortunate to have won Claudine. But, people told me, he was always lucky. He had a finger in everything that paid dividends and was up to his elbows in those that paid best. He had a passion for controlling, and, once in, never rested till he was boss.

I could well believe it, as I stood watching from the fringe of the circle, and found him fascinating. The set of his jaw, his stance, his overwhelming sureness of himself conveyed a ruthlessness I envied and determined to make a pattern for my future.

The story was that he had risen from unimaginable poverty. Some said Clanmorgan wasn't even his name. Certainly there were none who could remember his family. He had come like a comet from nowhere and, in a few years, had dominated the business world. He played as hard as he worked. He ran innumerable cars and an aeroplane he piloted himself.

I asked myself what Clanmorgan would have done had he found himself smitten as I had been—a young man lusting after a woman who happened to be the property of a middle-aged husband. Would he have permitted convention to stand in his path?

I imagined his technique. None of your cautious approaches, but a quick declaration, a sweeping off the feet. That, doubtless, was the way he'd won Claudine. And that, I decided, was the way I'd take her from him. I was not without experience and not unaware of the very frequent success of such tactics.

My chance came more speedily than I had expected. I'd danced with her. It was a fine, warm night. I suggested that we step into the garden, and she readily agreed. The setting was perfect. There was even a moon. She was in a gay and, I was convinced, receptive mood and, at what I deemed the right moment, I pulled her to me and kissed her soundly.

When she broke away she was panting but otherwise silent. Reproaches I could have dealt with, but she made none. Her eyes were filled with surprise and perplexity, and I got the impression she was analysing her past conduct, trying to recall anything that might have contributed to the situation in which she found herself.

I couldn't concede defeat and seized her hand, but she snatched it from me and stood back, rubbing her knuckles, and then, abruptly, she had gone. It was no coy flight. I knew that. I had not only failed but made myself ridiculous, and it angered and humiliated me. But, if she had found me contemptible, I, too, held her in contempt because, as she hurried along the gravelled path, her white figure alternately bathed in moonlight and cloaked in shadow, I realised why I had failed.

She had surrendered to Clanmorgan because he had come with gold in his hands. Everything was relative. Celeste, my aunt's maid, had surrendered to me because, in her eyes, I was prosperous and a prospective heir. That was the secret of it. If a man lifted his eyes to the Claudines of the world he had to have money—pots of it.

Then and there I swore, by hook or by crook, I'd get it and get it soon. Nothing should stand in my path. Nothing and nobody . . .

The inspector was drinking his coffee, and I wanted to get the thing over. "This is quite a chat, old man, but I've been expecting pertinent questions," I told him. "Such as—'Now, Mr. Greene, where were you between the hours of twelve midnight and 6 a.m.'?"

He eyed me over the cup. "Why twelve midnight?"

"Because Auntie was alive then."

"You saw her?"

"No. I didn't come in till 11.30. I went to my room, undressed, remembered I wanted to look up what price Philander started at, put on a gown and came downstairs to get the paper. There was a light under Aunt's door."

"That doesn't prove she was alive. Did you hear her?"

"No; everything was as silent as the grave . . . well, you know what I mean."

Nothing would get a smile out of him. "It could be she was already dead. It could be the murderer was in the room," he said. "But wasn't it customary for you to say good-night? Knock or call out, for instance?"

"What? At that hour and risk a curtain lecture? Aunt was the type that believed midnight was really the middle of the night."

He gave me a shrewd look. "See anything of Cousin David?"

"No, but him I did hear."

"Where?"

"In his room in the attic. I went up to borrow a book."

"I thought you came downstairs for the paper."

"I'd read that. All I wanted was to check on Philander's price."

"You say you heard young David?"

"Perhaps I shouldn't say any more," I said.

"You'd be advised to get

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THE CURIOUS CRIME

everything off your chest, Mr. Greene," he said.

"I suppose you're right," I admitted but I must have sounded doubtful. "You see, David was talking to himself . . . in his sleep, perhaps."

"Couldn't he have been speaking to someone?"

"Hardly," I said.

He asked, "Would you say he's rational?"

"Oh, I say, Inspector. I'm not an expert," I said. "I'll say this though. David's not the sort of chap to barge into any hazardous violence." He grunted, and I went on, "Perhaps I better say right away he's not the chap he was. I never get on with him, but not because he was a glum bloke. He was quite a bright boy till recently, though we never laughed at the same things."

He nodded. "Any illnesses?"

"Not to keep him in bed. There's one thing might be important. A few weeks ago he went into the void for two days. He came home looking like a warmed-up death. We couldn't get a whisper out of him as to what had knocked him off his perch or where he'd been."

"When you heard him talking last night, you didn't by any chance catch the actual words?"

"Is that evidence? What a man says in sleep?"

"You can't be sure he was asleep. You can't say positively he was alone. If his words have no relevance I'll forget 'em. I've had some queer dreams myself."

I hesitated. "I still think I'll play oyster."

He said, "Under examination you'd have to answer."

"I guess you're right," I said, "O.K. I'll talk, but, mind you, I don't think it had any significance."

"We'll be the judges of that, Mr. Greene."

"I feel a heel," I said, "but the words were: 'Don't you see, Davy, we've got to use the slip-knot.'"

"You're sure the words were 'Davy' and 'we'?"

"Of course. He was talking to himself."

He snapped his elastic band about his notebook and got up. "Thanks, Mr. Greene. Now, just as a matter of routine. After you heard Mr. Curtis use those words . . ."

"There was no light showing under his door and I didn't want to disturb him. I read the paper in bed for twenty minutes, fell asleep, and didn't hear a thing till Celeste brought the foul news in the dewy dawn."

He nodded slowly. "Reverting to the time David came home looking poorly. Maybe he'd got tangled in an automobile accident?"

"He doesn't drive a car."

"He could have been in one. Or got knocked."

I said, "There was no sign of violence on David when he came home."

He'd made it clear that what he'd got from David coupled with Celeste's statement about seeing the cord in the lad's room, plus what I'd overheard, had satisfied him as to the identity of the murderer. But his official mind was groping for motive. He said, "I phoned your aunt's lawyer to come here. You'll understand it's necessary for the police to know whether anyone benefits particularly by her death."

. . . . . .

Ponsonby, the lawyer, came fussing in while the inspector was third-degreeing Cynthia in Aunt's parlor. I gave him a solemn handshake hoping to get from his demeanor some indication whether he was the bearer of glad tidings or a herald of gloom, and took him into the dining-room.

Aunt Maly, I believed and hoped, would pan out well, and, after making provisions for penalties imposed because I had at times kicked over the traces, I'd set myself down for a modest five thousand.

Ponsonby, however, went poker face. He paced up and down the big room, saying over and over that it was a terrible thing. His silence on the vital point nettled me, and when for the umpteenth time he said it was a terrible thing I couldn't resist twitting.

"It's hard to lose a good customer," I said.

He stopped and glared. "Harder still to lose a good friend," he said, unexpectedly, because I really believed the old lady had no friends.

I wondered whether it was in his mind to throw a scare into me when he said abruptly, "Where is David? He'll have to be at the reading."

I didn't much like the sound of that. And then, I thought, if what Inspector Hack had in his mind was murder, David couldn't possibly benefit from Aunt Maly's will. I told Ponsonby that Davy was in his room, and added, "I rather think he's in a spot of bother."

"Bother? What bother?" he snapped.

"The police boys think he choked Auntie." I was glad to rock him.

But he was quite incredulous. "Rubbish," he snorted. "Go and fetch David. I'll want the three of you."

I RAN to the attic and was about to call David when I heard him on the other side of the door, not only talking but laughing. I caught the name "Claudine" and opened the door and put my head in. He swung around, his eyes throwing sparks. "You've driven her away," he cried.

I said, "I haven't driven anyone away."

He began to look about him as if he didn't believe me, and abruptly he said, "Franklyn, what does it mean? So many questions. Asking about my slippers. I can't find them." He looked warily towards the door. "Franklyn . . . Aunt Maly is dead."

If it was an act it wasn't bad. I told him Ponsonby was waiting to read the will, but he wouldn't agree to come down. "I want nothing from Aunt Maly," he said.

I allowed a full minute for him to change his mind and then shut the door on him and slipped into Celeste's room. She was sitting at her dressing-table, cross-kneed, polishing her nails.

"You've a nerve coming in without knocking," she said.

"It wouldn't be the first time, sweetheart," I grinned. "What's become of the little Rumanian's accent? Mind you, I don't resent having been fooled. I rather like it. You become two women. Both cute."

She bent over her nail polishing. "Has the lawyer read the will?"

"As a matter of fact I came up to tell David the lawyer's waiting. But he's not interested. Personally I'm on tiptoes."

She lifted her eyes slyly. "But if you're disappointed you won't be flat broke, will you, Franklyn?"

"Oh, but I will."

She was busy on her nails again and I said, "I popped in to give you a tip. Don't tromole on Cynthia's corns. If she's mistress here she could fire you."

"I wouldn't want to stay." She didn't raise her eyes.

"No, but you must have a job." I didn't relish the thought of Warriewood without her.

"Oh, I'm not worrying," she said. "Better not keep the lawyer waiting."

The inspector had finished with Cynthia, and I found her sitting in her characteristic attitude, straight of back on one of the least comfortable of the dining-room chairs, while the lawyer stood in front of the fire which had been set by the frightened daily maid.

"David won't come down," I told them.

"A pity," the lawyer said, and looked at Cynthia. "Then with your permission, dear lady, we'll begin." He turned her heavy chair for her and took the carver at the end of the long, polished table. With a curt nod he directed me to the seat on his left and opposite Cynthia.

I wet my lips as he produced the will. "Here we go, Cynthia," I said, but she appeared neither interested nor disinterested.

Ponsonby cleared his throat and began to read as though he were conducting the last rites.

"This is the last will and testament of me, Amelia Glass . . ."

There was a preamble. It concerned me. I was not left long in doubt that it concerned me very much indeed. In legal claptrap it announced that the testator having been financially helpful to her nephew, Franklyn Greene, on so many occasions did not intend to bequeath him a thing and hoped that such action on her part would have a chastening effect . . .

"Well," I said. "The old . . ."

The lawyer's cough smothered it. Cynthia said nary a word and avoided my angry eye. Her attitude suggested that she wasn't surprised; her silence that she'd expected something of the sort. I wanted to lean across the table and shake her bony shoulders. If I'd been able to look her straight in the eye I'd have known at once if she'd poisoned the old girl's mind against me.

But I hadn't the remotest recollection of her saying or doing anything to influence Aunt Maly unfavorably. Indeed I remembered times when she'd been embarrassingly loyal. The night of the fiasco with Claudine Clanmorgan, for instance, I'd come home at two in the morning and she'd sneaked downstairs and helped me up to my room and never blabbed a word.

I was not so drunk I didn't remember what an untidy parcel she looked in her shapeless dressing-gown. She'd pulled off my shoes and stuck a pillow under my head, and, as I rolled back on the bed, had kissed me. I was soused and sleepy—too sleepy to fight, but I remembered, though I never let on to her. Thinking of it sometimes, watching her, I'd had to chuckle to myself. I knew I had only to say the word and she'd be telephoning for orange blossoms.

But, with the grim news Ponsonby had delivered, I'd have to think about that kiss without chuckling. It was lucky I'd stumbled on that note from the boy David's mother and found the pendant, though I'd have to keep it in cold storage till there was a safe market.

I almost missed the lawyer's drone. "To my nephew, David Curtis, the sum of five thousand pounds."

A fat lot of good that would do Master David. He wouldn't be able to take it to prison with him or carry it on to a scaffold. Or make whoopee with it in a madhouse. He couldn't lavish it on a ghost.

Oh, I knew about him and Claudine all right, though he'd never guessed. Why should he? He'd been no more likely than I to make a cousin a topic of conversation, and she would never have told him about me. And I suppose it never occurred to her that there'd be a connection between a Curtis and a Greene.

The day following her refusal to play ball with me, I'd seen them together and watched them go up to his studio and guessed what was going on. It hurt. I'll say it hurt to see him making the grade I'd found too steep.

Well, a lot of good her smiles did him in the sticky end. I'd thought of going to Clanmorgan, but messengers with ill-tidings were never welcome. Some day I'd find a way of coming to his notice, and there was no telling what he mightn't be able to do for a chap.

How should I have known the crazy way he'd react to an unsigned warning that simply put him wise to what was happening under his nose?

Old Ponsonby was repeating with emphasis, "To my nephew, David Curtis, the sum of five thousand pounds," knowing it was a smack in the eye for me.

"I heard you the first time," I snapped. I didn't care how much I shocked him now and demanded bluntly, "What happens to that little lot now that David has killed Aunt Maly?"

Cynthia drew in her breath. The lawyer said unctuously, "I am not here to advise, but, since you have put it to me, I should say, should such a distressing possibility be proved fact, there would be little doubt that David was insane, in which event his affairs would be administered by the Master in Lunacy."

He eyed me with dislike and suspicion as he wiped his spectacles. "If you are imagining that his legacy or any part of it would revert to you I can hold out no hope . . ." He went on, enjoying himself, establishing plain fact with legal frill. Whatever they did with David I would be no further away from the poorhouse.

Then he rustled his papers and gave me my third jolt.

"To my niece, Cynthia Warren, my house, my jewels, and the sum of fifty thousand pounds."

I watched my cousin get the full impact and she didn't bat an eyelid. She sat, her pale eyes on the lawyer so that I saw her in profile, the flat top of her nose had become faintly pink. Fifty thousand pounds was going to that!

You'd have imagined from Ponsonby's fatuous grin, as he regarded her over his glasses, that he had given her the money himself. He waited for her to show she was overwhelmed, but, when she said nothing, coughed and continued reading. The rest of the will was unimportant. When he finished he pumped Cynthia's limp hand.

"If there is anything, Miss Warren. Should you desire an advance . . ."

It wasn't easy to sit there while he talked about advancing money to Cynthia. He put the will in his pocket, bowed to her, and turned to go. From the door he said, "Perhaps I should go up and acquaint David of his aunt's bequest. If he is in trouble he should have legal advice."

He stepped into the hall where, presumably, Inspector Hack was waiting to pounce.

I tempered my disappointment with the thought that, no matter how much David protested, the police would believe that five thousand pounds was motive enough for the murder of an old lady prone to changing her mind at short notice.

Somehow that soothed me. There was plenty to be saved from the wreck. I began to put on armor for a knightly bout with Cynthia — an assumption of good-natured acceptance of my own bad luck, a smiling congratulation upon hers, a kindly cousinliness ready to ripen to deeper things.

★ ★ ★

Cynthia

In those never-ending moments when the jury was out, I knew it was hopeless for David. "It'll be one of two things," Franklyn had said. "'Guilty' or 'guilty but insane.'" He'd insisted on sitting next to me in court, but I'd made arrangements with Mr. Ponsonby to take me away whenever the judge adjourned.

Sometimes when counsel was involved in argument over procedure, I'd find him looking at me, and I'd think how strange it was, after all that had happened, that I couldn't be moved! That far from wanting to be near him I wouldn't even let him know where I was living.

If the jury had come into court and said just one stark word I would have been screaming inside me, though, as always, I would have sat silent. I can't show emotion. I've spent my life in unloving houses. All deeper things have been bottled up.

Aunt Maly was, I had thought, a cold, unfeeling woman, and I am sure she never imagined I could feel affection, especially for any man. Franklyn thought that way, too, until after the reading of the will. Then he learned the fires lit within me.

But he didn't know the day he caught me listening to the racing results when we stood by the radio and heard Creosote lose. If Creosote had won he'd have fled from the dark monotony of Warriewood, as he had threatened that morning, because in his heart he never expected Aunt Maly would bequeath him enough to make staying worth while. He would have gone out of my life, and I believed I couldn't have borne that.

When he angrily shut off the radio I wanted to make him understand what it meant to me that he would be staying on, but I saw the heavy line of his brow and knew my company would be poor compensation for his bitter disappointment.

Even on the night I helped him to his room I couldn't say the things in my heart. But at least I learned what it was to have touched him with my lips though he made no sort of response.

I'd been awake an hour when Celeste came with the news of Aunt Maly's death. I recall forcing myself to ask had it occurred in sleep.

"Madame 'as been strangle," she said bluntly. "Weeth a slipknot."

She then helped me into my gown while I kept thinking not of my aunt but that Franklyn would be there and I would look a fright.

While I was feeling for my mules she swung about to open the door, and I saw the straight seams of the stockings on her shapely legs and hated her for being so well-groomed at such an hour, so spirited and crowded with health when, already, I was conscious of that dread feeling in my stomach to which years of frustration and small resentments had contributed so much.

The police inspector was not peremptory in his questioning. He asked me a great deal about David and his health and his relations with Aunt Maly, and a little about how I stood in her regard. He hinted that she might have remembered me liberally in her will. "She was a wealthy woman, I understand," he said.

We, at Warriewood, had that idea, though she had never taken us into her confidence and ran the house austerely.

She had adopted me when I was twelve, Franklyn at ten, and David at eight, and, because we were orphaned so early, it had never occurred to us that we should be grateful, nor, for the matter of that, had she ever indicated that she expected gratitude. For some years she had been making Franklyn an allowance. David, too, until one morning he told her he could no longer accept it.

"Very heroic, old son, but inconsiderate," Franklyn had said after Aunt left the room. "You've got your meal ticket from your mother's estate, but what about yours truly if the old lady decides what's good for Tweedledee might be good enough for Tweedledum? I wish you'd think of someone besides yourself."

It had not entered the thoughts of either that I might have some interest in the matter. I had no allowance. If I needed a hat or a frock it was Aunt who discovered it and decided what should be paid, though she took no interest in its selection. If I went shopping on her account, she'd dole out a few shillings for expenses, but apparently it never occurred to her that I might like some regular spending money.

Once I had made a half-hearted suggestion that I earn my own living. Franklyn had roared with laughter, and Aunt had treated the idea with contempt.

"What would you do?" she had asked, her eyes following the pattern of the carpet, and had added with unexpected warmth, "It's absurd and unnecessary."

With characteristic obstinacy she continued to pay David's allowance. Ironically, I was sent to the bank with the cheques and brought her the receipts. David, with his head in the clouds, probably never knew.

But I wasn't going to tell the inspector I had been treated as a poor relation. I said that Aunt Maly had never discussed her will with me, but I felt it would be natural if she provided in some way for her nephews and niece.

He asked me when I had last spoken to her and I said it was about ten. He said: "Did you notice any powder spilt on the carpet beside her bed?" I told him I hadn't. I had gone to her bedside and she had asked me to post a letter she wanted to catch the mail that night. He pricked up his ears and asked to whom the letter was addressed. I said I hadn't looked.

"A pity," he commented.

I told him I had said good night to Aunt before going up to the pillar and he referred to his notebook. "Then you must have been the last to see her alive," he said.

"Oh, no. David . . ." I stopped.

"You mean David Curtis saw her after you did?"

"When I returned after posting the letter I was going upstairs when David came down in his dressing gown. He went directly to Aunt Maly's door, knocked, and went in."

"And then you went up to bed?"

"No. I had promised to give Hildegard, our cook, something that would help her to sleep. She'd had toothache. I thought she might be in the kitchen and was going to tell her to look in at my bedroom on her way to her room. But the kitchen was dark and I surmised she'd already gone up. I was on my way up, too, when I heard Aunt Maly's door open. David came out."

"Did he speak to you?"

"I don't think he even saw me. He was looking back into Aunt's room and shouting."

"Angrily?"

"He seemed very agitated."

"What did he say?"

I tried to recall the scene. I remembered the sleep flush on David's face as he stood with his head lifted, one hand grasping the doorknob. I told the inspector, "As far as I remember, David said, 'Don't you dare speak of it. If you do—I don't know what I'll do.'"

"Did you consider that a threat?"

I knew what it would mean if I said yes, and I couldn't bring myself to say it. "I think he meant that whatever it was, he didn't wish Aunt to speak or, if she did, he would be left bewildered." The inspector's

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you was kindly enough, but I felt he hadn't believed me.

"That was all you heard David say?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Did your aunt speak?"

I shook my head. "David closed the door hard. He rushed past me up the stairs. I think he was so taken up with his own affairs he didn't realise I was there. I heard his door slam."

He said, "Miss Warren, are you sure it did not sound to you as though David was threatening your aunt?"

"Surely you can't expect me to say yes to that?" I said.

"I am sure you will tell the truth."

"No, it didn't sound that way," I said desperately. "I didn't attach importance to what he said. David is never violent."

"You've said David was in his gown. Was he wearing slippers?"

"I suppose so," I said. "I didn't notice."

"Thank you, Miss Warren. Now, after Curtis rushed past you and went upstairs, what did you do?"

"I went to my bedroom, found a sleeping tablet, and took it along to Hildegard. I spent a few minutes with her before going to bed."

"Did you mention David's outburst?"

"No. It was not a matter for the servants."

"Thank you, miss," he said. "What you've said checks. I have already spoken to the cook."

I told him I had taken a sedative and slept through the night, and he said, "Well, that's everything," and rose to open the door for me but hesitated. "About that letter you posted? Think carefully. You didn't get a glimpse of the address? Perhaps not the name. Maybe the street, eh?"

"No. I didn't look at it at all."

"But it had a stamp on?" he asked quickly.

"Yes—at least I suppose so. I hope so."

"Now, Miss Warren, I understand your aunt was a very sick woman. Her doctor had warned you all that death might come at any hour. Wasn't it your job to look after her?"

"I did what I could, Inspector. She absolutely refused to have a nurse. Celeste attended to her needs."

"Supposing she had suddenly needed attention? Isn't it curious that, knowing she was so ill, you should have said good-night to her, given Hildegard something to make her sleep, and taken a sedative yourself?"

I explained that Aunt, though a sick woman, was also a stubborn one. She hated fussing and didn't realise, perhaps, that she was as ill as the doctor said. She'd had a bell placed on the big double bed and within reach of her hand. We had experimented with this, and it could be heard plainly in the attic room where Celeste slept.

"With her door shut?"

"It was arranged that Celeste should leave it ajar."

"What!" He affected scandalised surprise. "With a young man sleeping in the adjoining room and no one else on the same floor."

"If you knew David as I do," I said, "you'd say the Archangel Gabriel was as likely to walk into the maid's room."

Things I say don't usually make people laugh, but he appeared amused. "Anyway, last night you did not hear your aunt's bell?"

"I heard nothing at all." I sighed with relief, thinking the ordeal was over, but he returned to the matter of the letter.

"Celeste left your aunt at ten o'clock. You must have seen Mrs. Glass immediately after. Why didn't she send the maid to post the letter?"

"I—I don't know," I said. "Perhaps she thought Celeste had had a hard day. How should I know!"

I was trying to assure myself the inspector was not placing importance on the letter. To have read the address on Aunt's letter would have been as great an impertinence as asking her to whom she'd written. That is how he'd see it. And if I'd posted the letter things would have been worse for David. Now they were thinking he wasn't responsible for his actions, but if I'd posted the letter . . .

After Mr. Ponsonby had read the will and gone to see David I was fearful Franklyn would make accusations, but, instead, he surprised me by grinning. "Cynthia, old girl. Congratulations. Now you're a great lady I suppose we won't see your heels for dust?"

"What makes you say that?" His unexpected gentleness confused me. I stammered lamely on, "Where should I go? I've nobody."

"Oh, there'll be flies round the honey pot." He was standing, hands deep in his trouser pockets, his eyes twinkling. "You might even get married now," he said.

Ordinarily that would have hurt, but his voice held no hint of sarcasm and a wild hope intruded on momentary vexation. He was giving me an opening. "That's ridiculous, Franklyn," I said. My face was burning. "Me?" I contrived a laugh.

"You and fifty thousand," he said. "You'll find plenty of suitors at your pretty feet."

Since childhood my feet have been a subject for jest with Franklyn, but he was smiling and so different I didn't resent his way of putting it. "My poor feet," I said weakly. "Who'd have me—and them?"

"Oh, come, Cyn," he said. "Every man's not looking for Cinderella. You're young, eager. The world's before you." He began lighting a cigarette and as he applied the match mumbled, "Well, everything's got to come to an end. I'd better get cracking and find myself a better job and a new roof."

I said the thing he expected. "Franklyn—you're not thinking of leaving Warriewood?"

"Needs must, my dear." He spoke with no bitterness. "Surely Aunt Maly's will made that clear." He sauntered to the closed door. "If I'm unable to find decent digs at once you won't mind me staying on for a day or two?"

It was the first time he had ever had to ask me a favor, the first time it had been in my power to grant one, and it gave me the courage to put my hand on his sleeve. Inside me I was crying out that if I missed this opportunity of keeping him by me everything would have been in vain. Somehow he might find money for his wretched gambling. A Creosote might come home and he'd win enough to live as he liked and where he liked.

"Franklyn . . ." I couldn't get further.

"Why, Cynthia!" There was an ironic lift of the eyebrow, but his voice was encouragingly gentle.

"You don't have to go, Franklyn — ever. You know that surely?"

He covered my hand with his palm. It was the first time any man had done that, and I knew he must be aware that my fingers were trembling with the contact. He said, "Why, Cyn—you're cold." He squeezed my hand, then abruptly let it go.

"But warmhearted," he said. "It's generous of you. But you and I in the same house! I was mad to suggest it. Aunt Maly's watchful eye closed forever! David taken away perhaps! No chaperon!" He shook his head, ironically virtuous. "It wouldn't do, Cyn."

I was on fire with the mere touch of him. I could hardly breathe. My fingers dug into his arms. "What should we need of chaperons?" I got out.

"Now, now, hold on, Cynthia." He was affectionately reproving.

TWO-PART NOVEL

I went on breathlessly: I had to say it then or it would never be said. "Franklyn—I thought this would make everything right for us. The money, I mean. I understand you, Franklyn. You'll always need money, and now Aunt Maly is dead you've nothing. But I've got enough—more than enough. This house, the jewels, and fifty thousand pounds. Surely we could be happy on that?"

"We?"

I didn't give myself time to think. I didn't care whether he was shocked or incredulous or even contemptuous. "We could marry," I stammered on. "As soon as you like. We needn't stay a moment longer in this horrid house. After all the bother about David has died we can go away."

He said slowly, "It's not so easy to forget. Have you thought what they might do with David?"

"It's not David, it's us I'm talking about." I couldn't bear to be side-tracked.

"I don't think they'll hang him," he said thoughtfully. David was mad. Hanging, gaol even, is unthinkable. "They'll shut him up," he went on relentlessly. "You know where. It's only a mile or two from here, with barred windows and high walls."

"We needn't live here," I promised. "We can sell this house and find another."

He patted my arm. "No, Cynthia, you're just being kind," he said. "You're sorry for me because Aunt wiped the black sheep and people will point and say, 'There's the chap who was disinherited. His cousin killed his aunt.' But don't you worry. I'll make out." He opened the door a fraction.

"Franklyn—I'm asking you to marry me," I said desperately. "I've got to know whether you will. Now. This very minute."

He closed the door and leant against it, regarding me. "Let's get this straight, Cyn," he said. "I hardly know what to say. You see, we've known each other so long. I had no idea I appealed to you that way." His hands fell lightly on my shoulders. "Little Cynthia! We've grown up, haven't we?"

I watched his narrowed eyes through a blur of tears and then, abruptly, he snapped them shut, his palm pressed fiercely into my back, and, for the first time in my life, I knew a man's kiss.

When he raised his head he retained my hands, faintly whimsical, wholly triumphant, but saying, "Don't think I'll let you throw yourself away, Cyn. You're somebody now, and I'm no catch. Let me get out of your sight for a while. I'll run down to Belpark, then, if you're of the same mind when I return, we'll call it a deal. Meanwhile mum's the word, huh?"

I nodded dumbly and felt the ecstasy of his hands sliding to my elbows. "You've got something, Cyn," he said, but when I offered my lips, "A man is only so strong, kid. Help me play the game."

I was in a panic. "Franklyn—you will come back?"

"It will be up to you, lady," he said, and looked at his watch. "I've got to tear myself away." He started to open the door but turned in some embarrassment. "By the way, Cyn, Creosote letting me down left me flat broke. I wonder if . . ."

"I have money upstairs," I told him eagerly. It wasn't true. I had no money, which was funny because I'd been left fifty thousand pounds. In my eagerness to meet his every little wish I remembered the housekeeping purse. "I'll get it," I said. "It's upstairs. I won't be long."

Inspector Hack and the lawyer were in the hall and Celeste was coming downstairs with towels. I hurried to the kitchen, and from the drawer in which the money for our housekeeping needs was placed I took all the available notes and returned to the hall.

Inspector Hack had moved to the front door with the lawyer, but the door to the dining-room was not quite closed and, reflected in the wall mirror, I could see Franklyn and Celeste. His back was towards me and her face hidden in his smothering embrace.

I waited, petrified, my eyes closed against the scene, and it seemed an eternity passed before I heard his satisfied sigh and then his voice reassuring her. "It's all right, she's gone upstairs. You wouldn't believe what I've been through this last quarter hour. I've got to take my medicine, but it's deuced unpleasant."

BEFORE the dizziness swept over me I saw Celeste's face, insolently proprietorial, and the sly twist of her painted lips as they framed the sardonic retort, "You won't be the first hero to marry for dough."

I heard him reassure her. "You'll be looked after, sugar," and somehow I had forced life into my leaden legs and was past the dining-room door and clinging to the stair railing and Ponsonby and Inspector Hack were hastening down the hall towards me, Ponsonby all commiseration. "Miss Cynthia — you're ill?"

"I'll be all right in a moment," I whispered. "I'll go to my room." I waited till I had regained some semblance of dignity. "Mr. Ponsonby, will you please give this money to Mr. Greene? He's going to Belpark."

I held out the pound notes, but before he could take them the inspector coughed authoritatively. "I'm afraid Belpark must wait, Miss Warren. There are certain formalities . . ."

The inquest, of course!

The lawyer patted my arm. "As far as you're concerned, my dear, a mere formality." He clapped the inspector's shoulder. "This old sleuth has been pumping me to find out how you stood in regard to poor Mrs. Glass. Well, it needn't be a secret any more. As I've informed him, no matter how often your aunt changed her will, she never changed in her attitude to you. For as long as I remember you were her first thought, and, as her resources increased, so she increased her legacy to you."

His voice softened. "She was very, very fond of you, my dear. She gave the impression that she was a hard woman, but once she said to me a very revealing thing. 'I wish I was one who could show affection,' she said, 'but we Warrens never wear our hearts on our sleeves.' "

I stared incredulously. What was he saying? Aunt Maly had cared for me? Enough to discuss her feelings secretly with the only friend she had? I'd always been in her thoughts and my welfare was her first consideration. As the door of the dining-room was pulled open and Franklyn appeared, setting his tie straight, I burst into tears and ran madly up the stairs.

Behind the closed door of my room I buried my face in the pillows of the unmade bed and wept myself red-eyed. Not because of the hateful and humiliating thing Franklyn had done to me but because the lawyer had revealed the opportunities I had lost for a proper understanding of my aunt.

Aunt Maly was a Warren, even as I. It was her prerogative and it should have been her pleasure to show me something of the sympathy to which I had been a stranger even in the years before I was orphaned. But what had I done to pierce the armor of her sensibilities? What word of love had I spoken, what gesture of affection had I ever made to help break down the barriers?

"We Warrens can't wear our hearts on our sleeves," she had said to the lawyer, and how well I knew it.

To Franklyn alone had I ever revealed anything of my true self, but, with Ponsonby's revelation thrown in sharp relief against the secret I carried in my heart, Franklyn's importance began to recede. Even his crude belittlement and attitude of boastful conquering lost their power to hurt, and, as I rose and moved to wipe my eyes and found myself still grasping the pound notes which I had taken from the kitchen drawer, I became confident I could face his treachery with firmness.

After all, what did I know of men other than Franklyn and David, both of whom held me in contempt? "There'll be flies round the honey pot," Franklyn had said, and there came thrusting up from my inner consciousness the thought that perhaps it had not been Franklyn I really wanted but any man.

I splashed water into my eyes preparatory to going down to face Franklyn, and was about to open the door when there came a hesitant knock and Franklyn's voice oozing apology, calling my name.

Holding the pound notes I flung the door wide. "Oh, you've come for the money," I said. He might have been the baker. I thrust two notes into his hand.

He regarded them ruefully. "This won't build many cathedrals, darling," he said, but his disarming smile couldn't hide his chagrin.

"I'd forgotten Hildegard will need housekeeping money," I said and swept past. He was astonished and puzzled. Before I had reached the turn in the stairs he was hot on my heels and I was glad because I wanted his ears to be filled with what I had to say to the lawyer.

Ponsonby was engaged in conversation with the inspector and when I was still some steps from the bottom of the stairs I called sharply to him. Almost I expected the heavy furniture, for so many years accustomed to my whispering timidity, to jump with the shock of this new-found authority.

"Yes, Miss Warren." Ponsonby came hurrying. It occurred to me that it was fitting I should speak my piece from my elevated position on the stairs. Franklyn, I was aware, was behind me, smiling superciliously, no doubt, but wondering. Inspector Hack had a frankly puzzled air and, near the dining-room door, the young sergeant was whispering to Celeste.

I had my audience.

I said, "Mr. Ponsonby, I cannot rest until I have signified my love and gratitude to Aunt Maly and done something to perpetuate her memory. Perhaps she had at some time spoken to you of a charity . . .?"

"Why, yes, Miss Cynthia," he said hesitantly. "From time to time she made anonymous gifts to the Orphanage."

"She shall be anonymous no longer," I said. "Will you kindly arrange that five thousand pounds of my legacy be donated to the Orphanage at once?" My hand was trembling on the balustrade but my voice held firmly. "I presume my aunt's allowance to my cousin Franklyn now ceases?"

"That is so, Miss Cynthia."

I said, "It is my wish that it be continued provided Mr. Greene understands that, in the event of him gambling, it will be cancelled forthwith." I knew Franklyn's face would be red, for everyone's eyes had turned his way and the sergeant was grinning openly.

In the moment of silence that followed there came a diversion. From the depth of the house a cloaked Hildegard emerged, umbrella'd against improbable rain, jammed on her head a hat trimmed with jet.

"Murder or no," she said to nobody in particular, "I bain going to the dentist," and without a by-your-leave waddled to the front door. The police inspector followed and obligingly opened it and stood watching her make her heavy way up the garden path.

In that moment I felt a touch on my arm and a voice said, "Excuse me," and David brushed past and hurried into Aunt Maly's parlor. I wondered briefly but I was full of my own affairs and, when the lawyer asked, "Is there anything else, Miss Cynthia?" I said at once, "I feel I should make a will."

"Very proper," he murmured and I continued, "If I died to-night, the fifty thousand pounds left me by Aunt Maly would have to be divided between David and Franklyn. I do not think that is what Aunt would have wished."

In my ear I felt Franklyn's hot breath and heard his whispered taunt, "Why not leave it all to the Y.W.C.A., my pet?"

I ignored him and went on resolutely, "I want to do the thing I feel Aunt Maly would have done had I died before her." My voice wavered. "At least I owe her that."

Mr. Ponsonby said, "I would be glad to advise you, my dear. Might I suggest we talk it over in the parlor?" He added with ponderous heartiness, "You're a very important young lady now, and, I am glad to find, a sensible one."

But, in the privacy of Aunt Maly's parlor, I found myself bereft of inspiration when he spread paper and poised his pen. I had inherited more than fifty thousand pounds and there wasn't a soul in the world who really cared about me. Bitterly I took Franklyn's sardonic advice and bequeathed the lot to the Young Women's Christian Association.

Mr. Ponsonby promised he would draft the will and bring it to the house after the funeral, when it could be signed and witnessed. "Of course, you may alter it at any time should you wish," he said as we left the parlor.

Celeste was loitering in the hall, conversing with the sergeant, and placed so that she could not help hearing what I said. "There is one thing more I would like you to attend to, Mr. Ponsonby. Celeste is to have a month's wages in lieu of notice. I wish her to leave immediately."

She heard all right and came over, her brazen hips swinging, accent vanished. "Suits me, Cyn," she said impudently. "I'm allergic to murder. And sleeping right alongside the suspect! W—ell! I'll pop up and put my bonnet on, but I'll be back to say au revoir."

Ponsonby snorted indignantly. "That is no way to talk . . ." he began, but she put out an insolent finger and flicked his nose. "Never mind the etiquette, gran'pa," she said. "You get the cheque." She ran up the stairs, poking out a red tongue as she passed the sergeant.

Inspector Hack came from the rear of the house. He had a pair of men's house slippers in his hand and asked me if I recognised them. He might as well have said, "Are they David's?" I said I didn't know, and he nodded. "They're your cousin's all right," he said. "I'm afraid, Miss Warren, that what I have to do will be painful for you. It will be my duty to arrest David Curtis for murder."

Mr. Ponsonby said reassuringly, "I've had a talk with

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THE CURIOUS CRIME

Davy. Everything will be done that is possible. I'll brief Dick Featherstone." Now that it had come, all the built-up courage of the last half hour began to ooze out of me. Ponsonby said, "I suggest you go to your room, my dear."

I found my tongue. "But the funeral? Surely David . . .? It isn't as if—as if he'd been proved guilty!"

The inspector said, "If he wants to attend we'll see he's there, Miss Warren." He made a sign to the sergeant who was lounging against the wall dreaming, no doubt, of Celeste's ankles. "Let's go up," he said.

The young man blinked, then nodded to the door of Aunt Maly's parlor. He said, "He's in there." He looked uncertainly at Mr. Ponsonby. "Isn't he?"

"Eh?" Ponsonby was startled. "Now I think of it, I thought he went in . . . Oh dear, dear!"

"What?" Hack roared and sprang at the parlor door, wrenching it open. The voile curtains floated like a bridal veil from the window through which David must have leapt to the shrubbery.

After one hysterical accusation of connivance, Hack became a whirlwind of action. Now the absent David alone held his attention, and we were free to move as we saw fit, so that, presently, Franklyn had gone off, his brow like thunder, and, in a surprisingly short time, Celeste had come downstairs. She set down her small bag and stood leisurely drawing on her gloves, regarding me with an expression so queerly contemplative and in silence so protracted I was forced into speaking first.

"You'll be sending for your things, I suppose?"

"Yes," she said slowly and without taking her eyes off me. "You don't mind, do you?" She was about to add something, thought better of it, and picked up her bag. "I'll be seeing you," she called, and went briskly to the front door.

As I closed the door I remembered that Hildegard was absent, and, except for the daily maid who was no more than a child, I was alone in the house. The silence appalled. The door of Aunt Maly's room seemed to leap at me, and I fled up the stairs.

In my room I changed haphazardly for the street. I told myself I should leave a message with the little maid, but that meant passing Aunt's door. I had no purpose, no plan, and when I found myself in the shopping centre of the city, I just wandered aimlessly.

No one, man, woman, or child, gave me a glance. I wanted to stop one of those complacent women and scream at her, "My aunt has been murdered, and I can tell you a terrible secret," or hold some smug man by the lapels and cry, "I was an heiress all the time. My aunt loved me and now I have fifty thousand pounds."

Had I wished to make more than a petty purchase there was nothing to buy it with, for I had but a few shillings in my purse, and, tiring, I entered a cafe and ordered tea and drank it slowly, spacing out time.

The long day closed in. My feet ached and my head was spinning. Shops and offices began to empty, and surging crowds milled about me, hustling for tram and omnibus.

A fleeting thought came that I might take a taxi. I could afford a taxi. I was a beneficiary under a will. "To my niece, Cynthia Warren, the sum of fifty thousand . . ."

I groped in my purse as I stood on the kerb and found barely enough to pay the bus fare home. Grim men and giggling shop girls jostled and peered into the gloom. Someone shouted, "Here's a 63," and I knew it was the bus I had caught so often in the company of my aunt.

The sudden surge of purposeful homegoers pushed me into the gutter, a huge arm encircled me and thrust me towards my bus. A voice, husky with beery good humor, cried, "Don't hold the world up sister, or there'll be murder. In you go."

. . . . . .

When I stepped into the dark hall back at home and was feeling for the light switch, a distant gleam pierced the gloom. I saw the door of Aunt Maly's bedroom was ajar, and, for the briefest instant, caught sight of Hildegard reaching to turn off the light. In the ensuing dark a door closed and footsteps padded kitchenward.

Suspicion flooded my mind. But there could be a dozen reasons why a domestic should go into Aunt's room. My nerves had made me imagine furtiveness. It was just that I was shocked at seeing someone coming out of a room nothing on earth would induce me to enter again. I switched on the light and walked down the long passage to the kitchen.

She was standing at the farther end of the centre table, her busy little eyes inquiring. "Well?" she asked as though we had some prior understanding.

"Well, what, Hildegard?"

"That David? Have the fools caught him?"

"I don't know," I said and, with a weak effort to hold together the tattered shreds of family dignity, "Why should they?"

"Why?" Her lip curled scornfully. "Did not Celeste tell the policeman she had seen the cord in his room? Weren't the slippers he'd hidden clotted with powder spilled by the poor soul's bed? Didn't his own man cousin hear his threat?"

She turned to the stove and I watched her dumpy back, stunned by her virulence. Everything that was hurtful to David seemed to be known, but I rose to no defence. All I could manage was, "Why should you be so bitter, Hildegard?"

Her hand reached for a canister above the stove. "He bain kill my mistress," she mumbled. "Sure as God he were responsible." She set the canister on the table. "I bain make some pea soup?"

"Just a little then, Hildegard," I said weakly. "If you wouldn't mind, I'll eat it here." I wanted nothing, but I couldn't face the thought of my room in the silent hours ahead. The courage of the morning, which had been bolstered by new hurts and humiliations, had drained away. Then there had been people moving about and it was day. Now I was alone in a hateful house with an old woman of whom I knew little, and it was night.

It came to me that Hildegard had been at the dentist's when I dismissed Celeste. "Celeste has gone," I told her.

"The little one won't be back neither," she informed me. "Her mother says it baint fitting she should work in such a house." She threw a cloth over the table while I took off my hat.

"And you, Hildegard?"

"To-morrow I bain go." She asked about the funeral and I told her what had been arranged, and she nodded understandingly. "To-morrow I bain make breakfast, then I go," she decided.

I realised I had been hasty in dismissing Celeste, but perhaps it was as well. I, too, wanted to get away from the house. To-morrow, greatly daring, I would fly from fear and, for the first time in my life, sleep away from Warriewood.

It had suddenly come to me that I could go to the Y.W.C.A. It was exactly the place for friendless women, and it would be inexpensive. I still couldn't believe I was rich.

I wanted Hildegard to talk to me. About anything or anybody except Aunt Maly and David, but she relapsed into taciturnity, clearly resenting my presence after our brief meal was over and the dishes washed.

"I bain go to bed," she announced.

I had to pretend. "I suppose I must go too. It's been a dreadful day." I went on desperately, "Will you sleep, Hildegard? Your tooth? Would you like one of my tablets?"

"The dentist fixed," she said shortly. "You bain go to bed, Miss Cynthia. I'll see to the window fastenings."

In the hall, Hildegard abruptly threw open the door of my aunt's room and rested her finger on the light switch. "I bain put the room to rights," she said. "Would you like to see?"

"No, I don't want to see," I said quickly.

"Come," she said, "there bain no such things as ghosts." Came a faint click and I was staring at Aunt Maly's bed while an ice-cold current fanned my face, for the window had been thrown open.

Clasped hands resting on her middle Hildegard stood, contemplative. "'Tis a room I'll have in my mind till I go graveward," she said slowly.

Somehow I forced my legs to carry me up the stairs. The dark was frightening, but anything was preferable to the blinding light that bathed Aunt Maly's bed. I shut my door and leaned there trying to shut out the vision of a helpless old woman waiting fearfully for death that was coming too soon.

I heard Hildegard shuffle to her room and her door close and then it was as if I were shut from everybody and everything. A frightening whisper came. "Purge yourself. Go down. Go down and kneel by the couch of the dead and pray forgiveness."

I knew I wouldn't go. I forced myself to undress and climb into bed and lie in the dark. I was weary with walking, and mind and body battled. I promised—in the morning as soon as it was light—I would kneel by my aunt's bed and pray.

ONCE again, there was a mocking whisper, then I was asleep and dreaming I was a bewildered little girl of twelve walking with Aunt Maly. I put my hand in hers, but she shook it off, pretending she had to seek something in her handbag, but all the time she was looking at the ground and saying, "One day I will give you all my money but someone will kill you for it."

I awoke. The chiming of the dining-room clock broke the quiet. It struck one. I sat up in bed not yet rid of my dream and heard a creak. And then, in a minute or an hour, from below and cutting across the silence, Franklyn's careless whistle. "Celia, I'd like to steal-ya."

I had an instant of blessed relief and then the thought came crashing in. There was no key to my door. Franklyn would presently come upstairs. But what sort of a Franklyn? The Franklyn who had crushed me to him and kissed me with lying lips? Or the Franklyn who would share my fifty thousand if I was dead before Ponsonby could bring the will?

I leapt from bed, opened the door and ran down the passage and round the corner and into Hildegard's room. "Hildegard," I sobbed. "I'm frightened. Let me stay here."

I was conscious of her grey head nodding in slow agreement and then I was in her bed, covered with her blankets, and presently she came and lay beside me and I cried on her breast, obsessed with my fear, so concerned for my wretched safety that it was not till I awakened in the comforting light and found myself alone that my mind recaptured a picture. Hildegard, a stumpy figure in a room that should have been dark, her hands clasped as she knelt before a chair on which was set a large photograph. Hildegard, scrambling to her feet, hiding the picture behind her as I burst in.

. . . . . .

Franklyn appeared at the breakfast table, sombrely dressed for the funeral, his hair glistening, his eyes dancing at me and trying to provoke me into speaking first.

"Well, we've got a nice day for it," he said at last and, feeling the ice broken, tried conciliation. "Now, look here, Cyn, what's the use of you and me quarrelling? I'm sorry about yesterday. I can't for the life of me understand why you should have blown hot and cold."

"No?" I couldn't resist it. "Perhaps Celeste does."

He guessed then what I'd seen. He threw down his napkin and came round the table and stood behind my chair. "So that's it," he said. "Cynthia, Cynthia, you're so young! (I was twenty-eight.) So inexperienced. You know so little of the Celestes of this world." For good measure he threw in a subtle compliment. "I grant you Celeste has a certain brassy attraction, but she'll never get more than fleeting attention from any man. It's the quiet type, the modest type, the home type that holds, Cynthia."

When I was silent he affected embarrassment. "I—well, a man doesn't like talking about these things, Cynthia, but I guess you saw Celeste kiss me. Oh, I'll admit I'd been fool enough to take a few liberties. Men do with her sort. But they don't mean a thing and now, very sensibly, you've chucked her out and we're well rid of her."

It pleased me I could hear him in such cold calm. When he put his hand on my shoulder there was no thrill.

I said, "I'm closing Warriewood. After the funeral I will be going—to some hotel."

"A jolly good idea," he agreed. "I'll take your bags."

"No, I can manage," I said. "Besides, you have your work. You were absent too long yesterday. You should go back after the ceremony."

"By jove, yes," he said, too easily compliant. "A man's got to watch his job. You're sure you'll manage? Where will you go?"

"Mr. Ponsonby will fix something," I said at hazard.

"Of course. He's drawing your will, isn't he? I think that's sensible of you, Cyn." He laughed self-consciously. "I hope you didn't take me too literally when I suggested leaving your money to the Y.W.C.A. But what does it matter? You'll probably make hundreds of wills. Auntie did. Perhaps if she'd lived a day or two longer she'd have been kinder to me. Believe it or not, Cynthia, I'd really determined to turn over the proverbial leaf. That Creosote fiasco made me sadder and wiser."

I didn't even tell him I was glad and he pushed his cup away and went to the window. He was seething.

Heavy footsteps came pounding along the hall and Hildegard appeared dressed for the street, but flushed and panting with unwonted exertion. "Mr. Franklyn!" she cried. "Curtis bain upstairs—asleep. He crept in in the night. Send for the policeman, Mr. Franklyn." She was actually tugging at his arm.

He looked at me for guidance but I avoided making a decision, and he said, "It's got to come in the end. I'll phone."

When he was through, Hildegard said, "I bain set kitchen to rights and made beds."

"What! You clearing out, Hildegard?" Franklyn asked.

She was almost at the door. "Good-bye, Hildegard," I said to her back. "And thank you."

She looked round, staring at me a long moment. "I bain thinking you should," she said at last and regarded Franklyn as if she were going to speak to him too. However, she changed her mind, grunted, and waddled out.

. . . . . .

How strange, I thought, as the little procession moved off, that one who had lived so long should be mourned by so few. But that was, perhaps, because of Mr. Ponsonby's connivance with the police. The time of the funeral had not been announced, and we had driven to the cemetery by a devious route, Franklyn and I in the mourning coach sitting opposite David whose attendance Hack had permitted.

Immediately behind us Ponsonby followed in his old-fashioned car and then came the inspector and some plain-clothes police. There was only one other car.

I stood at the graveside between David and Franklyn. This is the end, I kept telling myself. This is the last of Aunt Maly. Only hang on to yourself for a few moments more and then you can begin forgetting. But, when they lowered the coffin, and I knew that beyond the polished lid was my aunt's accusing face, I felt I was going to faint.

Franklyn's arm went round me. "Steady, old girl," he whispered. David hadn't noticed. I could have fallen into the grave and I doubt if he'd have moved.

The parson prayed and I knew that it was nearly over, and then I winced at a voice.

"Poor, murdered soul!"

It was Hildegard, standing on the other side of the grave, dressed in deep black and speaking with a slow drawl. She was holding a bunch of violets and presently she stretched her gloved hands, and the violets fell in a perfumed shower on Aunt Maly's coffin.

I was only briefly conscious of the parson murmuring practised sympathy, and then Franklyn was steering me towards the mourning coach. David didn't seem to realise it was over, and Franklyn touched his arm. In a voice harsh, unreal, and profoundly disturbing in the cemetery hush, David cried, "Go away. I'm expecting somebody. Go away."

Inspector Hack made the smallest gesture, and Mr. Ponsonby held open the door of the mourning coach and I preceded Franklyn in. The lawyer said, "I'll follow you to Warriewood." Ignoring Franklyn he whispered to me, "I've briefed Featherstone. He'll have a talk with the boy and see what he can make of him."

As we drove off I saw David walking along the gravelled path between the tombstones. He was smiling as if in greeting. Two plainclothes men were leaning over a railing, watching him, but pretending to read an inscription on a headstone.

. . . . . .

When we reached Warriewood there was a note for Franklyn. It had been pushed under the door and I picked it up and handed it to him. He ripped the envelope, read, then thrust the letter into his pocket. "Condolence," he said. "A chap in the office." He insisted that I would need tea and brewed a pot and brought a tray into Aunt Maly's parlor as Mr. Ponsonby arrived.

"You'll make a head waiter of me yet, Cyn," he said and talked platitudes with the lawyer. When we had finished tea, and I hinted that his office might be expecting him, he jumped up and took the tray to the kitchen. Five minutes later he called good-bye and we heard the front door slam.

Within the quarter hour I had signed my will in the presence of two carters who had called to collect my baggage and move it to the Y.W.C.A. and, with further assurances of his desire to be of assistance, Ponsonby had departed. I had already phoned for a taxi.

Unwilling to wait alone in the house, I stepped on to the verandah. Never again, I told myself, as I pulled the front door closed after me, would I enter Warriewood. And then I saw the envelope held in place by the brass knocker. It was addressed to me and in the handwriting I had seen on the envelope Franklyn had received.

In the taxi I read the words written on the cheap letter paper:

"So they've buried the poor old lady. But we won't forget her, will we, Cynthia? We must have a nice long talk about her."

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first entrapturing sound of Jennie's voice, no one would listen to the piano.

Dan, prepared for a dribble of charming notes, was caressed with sounds as musical as a mountain brook and elusive as a zephyr. There were words, and they were clearly spoken. No one could mistake them for a hum. And no one could hear Jennie Powell singing without sighing a little when she stopped.

Jack was triumphant. "You can't hardly call what she's got a voice," he said. "It's more like the sounds a fir tree makes when a breeze is passing through, but now we know how we can get it on the air. And it belongs on the air. For radio it's terrific."

Yes, Dan said, because he was honest, terrific described it. With a separate mike, and built up on radio, even on television, Jennie Powell's voice would bring her fame.

And why not, Dan asked himself. If she could win fame, shouldn't she have it? And if he could get rid of her, shouldn't that be allowed, too?

The answer was no. Wearily, with a trailing memory of the voice he had just heard, Dan reiterated Ben Baxter's concept of Ad Lib: "Little people talking little talk, unpatterned, unrehearsed. And no stars, Jake. You understand me? No stars."

After three profane minutes, Jack said all right, all right, he got it. But as Dan left the engineer's booth he was becoming aware of the lonely street Ben Baxter's moment of whimsey had laid out for his helpless feet.

Back in his office he put in a call to San Francisco, and when the call came through he said things had smoothed out for him here and he would be attending the three-day Communications Convention after all.

Continuing . . . . The Marriage Market

from page 5

This decision cost him another night's sleep while he prepared a monograph on The Inspiration in Local Programming.

And three days later, having presented the paper, he was responding to questions when the loud-speaker in the assembly room summoned him to the telephone. New York was calling.

"Say"—Ben Baxter, shouting into his ear—"what are you doing in San Francisco? Never mind. What I want to know is what's this Ad Lib?" He spelled it, as for a child.

"What's that? What's that? I say, what's this programme they're talking about back here coming out of KJAI called Ad Lib?"

He listened at last, breathing heavily over the wire into Dan's ear. "I do? You say I did? Did I pick up that singer, too—what's her name?"

"I can't hear you for static!" Dan said, shouting.

"Be there in the morning. And listen, Dan, the network wants that programme. Don't let anything happen to it, you understand me? Don't change a thing!"

He was even more explicit the next day when he returned. In his office, revitalised by enthusiasm for Ad Lib, he discounted Dan's stubborn reminders of the programme's unpretentious origins.

What did it matter how the thing had started? What was this nonsense, no stars? That girl, that singer, was a star.

"The network wants the whole thing moved to New York. Too expensive to reverse the net for a fifteen-minute programme. The thing needs polishing," the old man said. "Better production. We'll put a script writer on it and give it more pace."

"You'll kill it."

To hear himself defending the programme he had hoped to neglect to death surprised Dan, and he paused, giving Ben an opportunity to repeat everything he had said up to this point and several things he hadn't thought of till now.

He talked for thirty minutes. He said Ad Lib was going to be the biggest thing in radio's history. Moved to New York, it was going to make radio history.

"You're nuts, Ben," Dan said. "That programme can't be built and it can't be scripted and it can't be paced. It's good because it isn't radio; it's Jennie Powell. She isn't radio, either. But people like her, and when they're with her they spark because she sparks."

He paused again, bewildered by his enthusiasm. "And let me point out another thing," he said, pounding Ben's desk in an effort to offset bewilderment, a state of mind he had spent years conquering and which he hoped to outshout now. "If you ship Ad Lib to New York, most of your office force will go with it. They are the programme."

Ben was rocked by that. KJAI was his life, and its staff were his progeny.

"I'll talk to the girl," he said gruffly. "She can go back there. She can set the programme up with other people. You said yourself she sparks."

Dan found Jennie in his office. He didn't go in. He opened the door, delivered Ben's command, and went looking for Jack.

Jack didn't deny that he'd kept the separate mike on Jennie every time she sang, nor that he'd cut the gain on the piano and over-all mikes and cranked hers up to give her voice a better delivery.

"I'm an engineer," he said. "You give me the programme. I do the best job I can on it. You don't like it, you go talk to my union."

"All right, all right, all right, but you've amplified her right out of KJAI. Go talk that over with your union."

"Well, so what?" Jack said, "that's what you've been wanting, isn't it? You've been wanting to get rid of her. It's all over KJAI you can't stand the sight of her. What are you squalling about?"

After a thoughtful moment, Dan said he didn't know.

"I know what you're up against," Jack said. "She took over this programme and she built it into something the network wants, and what does that make you look like? You're programme director, but maybe she's smarter than you are, and what's the old man going to do about that? You got your job to think about. But the way things have worked out, she'll be leaving, and you'll be sitting pretty."

"Thank you, Jack," Dan said. "Thank you for reminding me."

Obviously Jack was right. Dan had no worries about his job, but with Jennie Powell continuing on at KJAI there might come a time when he would have worries about his mind.

And he told himself, too, that Jennie deserved her chance, she had earned it. This was it. He was pleased. Talent must be broadcast. It was an old radio maxim.

He believed immutably in radio and in maxims. He must remember that, he thought; he must keep it in his mind.

He was scheduled to give a luncheon talk at the Chamber of Commerce, and after that he went over to the mayor's office to complete arrangements for recording his address at a meeting.

It was close to six o'clock when he returned to the station, and the place had the barren feel of an empty warren. But Ben was still there. The switchboard operator told Dan the old man wanted to see him.

"He's talking to Jennie again," she said. She was subdued, a little frightened. "What's going on, Mr. Stuart? Mr. Fogarty's been in there, and Mrs. Surrey, and now Mr. Baxter's talking to Jennie."

Dan had no idea what was going on, but he found out almost at once when he stepped inside Ben's office.

Jennie was certainly there. She was sitting with her hands folded gently in her lap, and as Dan entered she gave him a serene glance and a nod.

On the other hand, Ben's sparse white hair was as ruffled as though a partridge had been scratching through it for seeds, his eyes were wild, and his fists were clenched.

"Dan," he said, "you're smart. You talk to her. She won't say yes. We go around and around, and all she says is she can't sing, she hums, and she doesn't produce the show, it produces itself, and she won't go to New York. She keeps talking about pieces—wrong pieces and right pieces. We've been at it all day. But she just keeps sitting there saying no."

He paused to look at Jennie with a wrath born of weariness and frustration. "Look," he said, coaxing her, "you know Dan Stuart. He's smart. Will you listen to him?"

"I'll be glad to listen to Mr. Stuart." She rearranged herself in the chair to look up at Dan. She smoothed her skirt. She refolded her hands.

Dan took his time, searching for the right words. He took so long that one of her hands began to move ever so slightly in her lap. She crossed two fingers.

Dan saw her fingers cross. He saw them turn white with pressure. He saw, in that gesture, the whole secret of Jennie Powell. She was playing the game of squares, too, and she'd come to a moment of vast decision, of vast terror.

"You think I'll discard the wrong piece?" he said.

She could have a career if she wanted it, he knew that. In his flat the rooms would look pretentious the moment she entered. He knew that.

She probably sang before breakfast, and planted bulbs upside down, and ate the parsley laid on her plate for decoration. Not because she didn't know better. Because she wanted to.

She would always confound stuffy people. She was certainly no wife for a young radio executive who had outlined all the right moves to be made between now and a million dollars.

"Will you marry me, Jennie?" he said.

She stood up slowly, swaying a little, and all her pert composure fled. She looked young and defenceless.

"Are you sure, Dan?"

"Are you?" he said.

She was in his arms before Ben began to bellow at them. After all, he was old. His reactions were slow.

"Kiss her, stupid," he said. "That's the first yes she's said to-day."

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Continuing . . . **Straight on from Here**

from page 3

isn't expecting me, I must get off some wires. Do come."

He disengaged her hand.

"Sheila, this is my wife, and we haven't met in years. We want to talk. You go find your nice old Army type to help."

She went off, with a friendly grimace, and took the arm of an elderly admiring man. Keith grinned.

"The helpless type, who must have a man around to do all the nasty little jobs. She married a Yank, and I gather he's pushed little helpless Harriet back home for a while. Carol, you've changed. Your hair's longer. And that hat!"

"I told you about my hair, Keith, ages ago. Keith, you're enormous. You said you'd put on weight, but I still had a vision of you as one of the original hollow men."

They filled in waiting time with trivial chat, and when they went in to have coffee before the Melbourne plane left Carol was relieved to hear a male voice exclaim:

"Well, it's Keith Foster, back from places far and new! What gives, old boy?"

A jolly back-slapping, reminiscent quarter of an hour followed, with Keith looking apologetically across the sandwiches at Carol and Carol feeling nothing but relief. There seemed no point of contact between this huge stranger and herself other than talk of the past or of present trivia. The thought of a shared future was alarming and impossible.

The presence of the helpless girl Sheila on the Melbourne plane was at once an irritation and a comfort. Her seat was in front of Carol's and the continual burst of high-powered chat which rattled back bridged the silence which hung heavily between the Fosters.

Keith stared steadily at the notices on the cabin door. Carol looked through the window, occasionally drawing his attention to a flotilla of silver cloud. The serving of a meal was a relief. Over the chicken, Carol said:

"I suppose eating on planes is very tame to you. I find it thrilling. It seems so delightfully cosmopolitan and adventurous. The trip over was my first. How many have you made, Keith?"

His reply did not penetrate past the outer wall of her confused mind. Surely this isn't us, she thought, these two stiff strangers, making polite chat. What shall we do? How can we get through to each other again? This is the day I've been living for, and it's empty, nothing to it at all. He must feel the same or we wouldn't act like this.

The landing notice flashed on. Keith asked:

"Are we going straight to the house, Carol?"

"Well, I thought that would be best, unless you want to see a show, perhaps."

"See a show, on my first night home? No, THANKS. Home sounds wonderful after five years of hotels. That is, unless you would like to."

"No, of course not. And as we've had the meal on board, we don't need another big meal. I'll slip down to the corner shop when we get back and get bread and milk and things. I've got plenty of tins, if you'd like something on toast later. There's a tin of asparagus I've been saving for years, just for this."

"For me?"

"But of course."

"Good, we'll have that. What's the house like, Carol? It sounded good."

"Oh, it is, Keith, it's the dearest little house, small, but with a lovely big garden, lots of trees and actually a hammock under one of them. I had it put up last week. You've always wanted a hammock."

"So I have. And what an elephant-like memory you have. Do we own this house entirely?"

"Well, I do, that is, of course we own it. When mother died, leaving the big house to us, Jenny and I thought it best to sell. It was such an enormous old barn, and with all that ground we got a simply fantastic price for it, enough to buy us each a small modern house. It's extremely like that little place we cut out of a magazine, Keith," Carol said, almost breathlessly.

"Remember, we had it pinned on the wall at the flat. It's little and compact and charming and it's the right shape to have one or two rooms built on later."

"Sounds pretty good as it is," Keith said. "Why add more rooms? Planning a large-ish family?"

She was embarrassed, and annoyed with herself for feeling so. At least two fat, amiable, and almost immediate babies had been mixed in her thoughts of the house, but they had surely nothing to do with this detached, colorless man. She said gaily:

"What a smooth landing. I'm sold on air travel. I'd like to do the trip all over again. Have you got much baggage?"

"A couple of bags and this small one. The big stuff is coming by ship. Let's go, Carol, I want to see the house."

The small white house, surrounded by green of trees and shrubs, was as attractive as Carol had claimed. Keith put his cases in the hall and roamed through approvingly.

"It was certainly our lucky day when this turned up. It's just what we planned."

In the front bedroom he stopped, looking thoughtfully at the two beds.

"Nice bit of wood in those beds, good design, too. I note that the Fosters are no longer old-fashioned in their sleeping habits. What happened to the old furniture?"

"After all the years in store, and having been second-hand to start with, it was terribly shabby, Keith. I put it in the spare room."

"Hmm, I see. Well, I guess you know what's right in furnishings. Carol, what's the matter? You're so jumpy."

"Nothing really. Keith, would you like to have a bath while I go down to the corner for some butter and bread and stuff? The towels are in the big cupboard."

She had vanished before he could reply and he walked thoughtfully through the house, thinking of Carol and himself and wondering how things were going to add up.

If this uncomfortable afternoon were an indication, the addition would not be impressive. On the plane coming home, his eagerness to see Carol had been occasionally dulled by doubts on his ability to pick up the threads again. She seemed to share these doubts.

There must be a key which would unlock that rich, immediate sympathy that had always flowed between them. He and Carol had been "simpatico," as that Italian in Paris would have said.

He knew their marriage had been too good not to stand up to this long separation, but obviously they needed time. Impulsively he carried his bags into the spare room, looked ruefully at them, then unpacked a sports shirt and went to the bathroom.

When he came out again, Carol was in the kitchen. Coffee was bubbling in the percolator and she was standing dreamily by the toaster still wearing the astonishing little maize-colored hat with the enormous feather. The toast was burning.

"Ah, good, burnt toast!" he said. "In the past five years my diet has suffered sadly from lack of carbon. Nobody else has ever burned toast so nicely or frequently as you."

Carol turned the toast and looked at him happily.

"Keith, it's you!"

"Were you expecting somebody else?"

"No, I mean it's really YOU, in slacks and a sports shirt. You didn't look real before. You were so dreadfully like a foreign correspondent in a film."

"But I am a foreign correspondent," he said laughingly.

"Yes, but I've never seen you looking like one before. It was a shock. Now you're you and it's much better."

Keith said, "I wouldn't mind

To page 55

FOR THE CHILDREN

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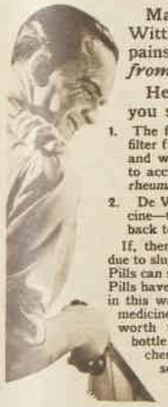

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Straight on from Here

from page 54

seeing a recognisable you, either. Would you mind removing that astonishing hat and that magnificent and undoubtedly shockingly expensive suit? You never used to wear clothes like that, either."

"Couldn't afford 'em, but with you mostly living off the expense account and my salary going up and up, I've been splashing. Don't you like the suit? I think's its quite wonderful. Look at the line!"

She revolved for his inspection.

"You look beautiful, Carol, but alarmingly like something out of 'Vogue.' Go and put on some old clothes so I'll know you. I'll do some fresh toast."

She came back, wearing a bright flowered cotton frock, legs bare, her feet in sandals. Her shoulders were as tanned as her legs. She looked young and radiant and, to a long-absent husband, very beautiful.

"Remember me?" she asked.

"I certainly do. Now that we're both recognisable, do you think we might greet with a little more warmth than that ice-cold kiss at the airport? Carol, mind that cord!"

He spoke too late. She had curtsied gracefully to him, then as she rose to come over to him her foot caught in the electric flex. She sprawled on the floor and the toaster landed against her leg.

Keith kicked it away and bent to pick her up. The flesh where the toaster had rested was already taut and red. Carol's lips were open over clenched teeth as the pain bit in deep. He asked:

"Quickly, where do you keep the burn stuff?"

"I haven't got any. I kept meaning and meaning to get more and I forgot."

"Hang on a minute then; I've got some in my grip."

He dumped her in the spare-room armchair while he rummaged for the tube. "There we are," he said, as he finished smearing the large reddened patch of skin. "This is the very latest in home-burn treatments. The patient will be better in a jiffy."

Carol's eyes had been noting his luggage strewn about the room, his Burberry hanging up, the hat on the bed.

Keith noticed her glance and said: "I thought you might prefer it this way, but my mind has always been receptive to new points of view. What's your opinion?"

Tears gushed suddenly from Carol's eyes.

"My darling, what is it? The burn?"

"No, it's—Oh, Keith, I've been waiting for you for so many years and things kept happening to keep us apart, and then when you came you weren't you; you were a dreadful stranger in a foreign correspondent's coat and hat, and everything went wrong."

"Sweetheart, darling, oh, Carol, what can I say except that I nearly went crazy thinking about you, remembering, planning, wanting to be with you and tell you things, know how you felt about everything. Nothing is ever going to separate us again, Carol—not families or operations or sinus troubles or continents or dollars. The Fosters stay together for always. Does that suit you?"

"Very much, darling."

The long embrace was broken by a sniff from Carol.

"Keith, what is it? Something's burning!"

"Oh, gosh, that toast. When the thing fell on you I kicked it away but forgot to turn it off."

They rushed for the kitchen, now reeking of singed linoleum, burnt toast, and scorched, dry coffee grounds.

Keith turned off the switch and Carol flung up the window, laughed, rushed across to him, and tripped over the cord again.

"That's my girl," Keith said tenderly, as he gathered her up once more. "My own girl, not an elegant stranger in a costly suit. There's never been anyone like you for falling downstairs, tripping, or forgetting to fill up the medicine cupboard. Home—it's wonderful! Hotel life was never like this."

"Keith, I do love you very much. Did you turn off the coffee?"

"I did. Carol, don't you think the spare room has a more welcoming sort of look about it than the grand new stuff you bought? Let's accustom ourselves gradually to grandeur and start right back where we left off. Agreed?"

"Agreed." She sighed. "Darling, it's wonderful. A couple of hours ago everything seemed wrong and appallingly out of focus. And now, well, now it's . . ."

"Straight on from here!" Keith said.

(Copyright)

Beauty in brief:

CHIN CHATTER

By CAROLYN EARLE

● There are lazy muscles around the chin and the throat that let you down, so do watch out for the first signs of slackness as well as crepiness there.

KEEP the underchin and throat well lubricated with suitable cream to freshen drying skin, and with your two hands encourage the muscles to remain firm.

Start creaming at the base of the throat, and using both hands alternately cream upward to your chin.

You may work firmly on the relaxed throat and chin line, patting for five minutes at a time.

When all the cream has been absorbed, swab the area with a pad soaked in cold skin tonic.

Keeping a high head in the daytime and wearing a chinstrap at night are helpful habits.

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Why? Because Lactogen is the perfect answer to feeding troubles when breast milk fails or natural feeding becomes inadequate. You see, Lactogen is a pure whole milk food, scientifically processed to ensure complete assimilation and easy digestion. In addition, Lactogen contains added Vitamins A and D, plus Organic Iron in correct proportions, to guard against infection and to promote growth. Think, too, how easy Lactogen is to prepare — just measure, sprinkle on top of warm (previously boiled) water and stir briskly! Could anything be better for baby or easier for mother?

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After the luncheon is ended
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BANANAS...

Bananas, golden flecked with brown when fully ripe, develop a new tantalizing flavor when cooked.

MAKE GOOD USE OF BANANAS while they are at their best. Illustrated above are banana boat salad, waffles with ice-cream and banana sauce, banana bar cake, and bananas Newburg with fried chicken. Recipes for these and other dishes are given below.

BY OUR FOOD AND COOKERY EXPERTS

EATEN raw, bananas are a satisfying fruit, rich in natural sugar, minerals, and vitamins.

When they are cooked with other sweet or savory food a delicious and different flavor is brought out.

Bananas are best for cooking while still green-tipped or when the skin is yellow but unflecked. They are sufficiently ripe for eating at the clear yellow stage, though the rich flavor does not develop until they are fully ripe and flecked with brown.

Any fruit juice or sugar syrup poured over cut bananas will prevent discoloration. They should be cut with a stainless knife.

All spoon measurements in the recipes below are level.

BANANA ICE-CREAM WAFFLES

Waffles (home-made or quick frozen), sliced bananas, ice-cream, banana sauce, lemon juice.

Slice bananas and drench with lemon juice to preesrve color. Heap sliced bananas on hot, freshly made or reheated waffles. Top with a generous scoop of ice-cream, pour banana sauce over, and serve immediately. A sprinkling of chopped walnuts may be added if desired.

Banana Sauce: Beat together the thinly grated rind of 1 small ripe lemon and the strained juice of 1½ small lemons, ¾ cup sugar, and 1 beaten egg. Add 1 tablespoon butter or substitute and stir over low heat until slightly thickened. Fold in 2 tablespoons orange juice and 2 mashed bananas.

BANANA BOAT SALAD

Peeled bananas, lemon juice, thin slices of processed cheese, sliced orange and cucumber, parsley, date balls with cottage cheese.

Drench peeled bananas with lemon juice to prevent discoloration. Cut a thin slice from each banana so that it stands with the curve uppermost. Cut triangular sails from cheese, set in place with cocktail stick. Arrange on salad platter with orange and cucumber slices, parsley, and date balls with cottage cheese.

CELESTIAL TARTLETS

One dessertspoon gelatine, ¼ cup cold water, ½ cup sugar, ½ cup orange juice, pinch salt, 3 egg-yolks, 1 dessertspoon grated orange rind, 1 dessertspoon lemon juice, 1 cup mashed, ripe bananas, extra ½ cup sugar, 3 egg-whites, cooked tartlet cases made from shortcrust or biscuit pastry, whipped cream.

Soften gelatine in cold water. Combine first quantity of sugar with orange juice, salt, and egg-yolks. Cook over boiling water until mixture thickens. Add softened gelatine and orange rind. Remove from heat, allow to cool, stirring occasionally. Mix lemon juice with mashed bananas, fold into gelatine mixture. Lastly fold in egg-whites, which have been beaten to meringue consistency with second quantity of sugar. Fill into cooked and cooled tartlet shells, allow to set. Top with a swirl of whipped cream before serving.

BANANA TEA BREAD

Three ounces butter or substitute, 3oz. sugar, ¼ teaspoon grated lemon rind, 2 eggs, 2 mashed bananas, 1 dessertspoon lemon juice, 1 cup plain flour, 2 teaspoons baking powder, pinch salt, ¼ teaspoon bicarbonate soda, ½ teaspoon spice, 1 cup wholemeal self-raising flour, 4 tablespoons milk.

Cream butter or substitute with sugar and lemon rind. Add eggs one at a time, beating well. Fold in bananas mixed with lemon juice, then plain flour sifted with baking powder, salt, soda, and spice. Lastly fold in wholemeal flour and milk. Turn into greased loaf-tin, or two greased nut-roll tins, bake in moderate oven 40 to 50 minutes if in nut-roll tins, approximately 1 hour in loaf-tin. Serve sliced and buttered.

BANANA CREAM BAR

Two ounces butter or substitute, 3oz. sugar, 1 egg, 2 or 3 bananas, lemon juice, ½ teaspoon bicarbonate soda, 1 tablespoon milk, 4oz. self-raising flour, pinch salt, whipped cream (or mock cream).

Cream butter and sugar, add egg, mix well. Reserve sufficient sliced banana to decorate top, soaking the slices in lemon juice to prevent discoloration. Mash balance of bananas and fold into creamed mixture. Add soda dissolved in milk, then sifted flour and salt. Turn into greased bar-tin, bake in moderate oven 25 to 30 minutes. Cool on cake-cooler; when cold slit along the top, lift slightly, and fill with cream. Decorate with banana slices drained free of lemon juice. Dust cake with sifted icing sugar.

BANANA CREAM MOULD

Five mashed bananas, 1 tablespoon gelatine, ¼ cup hot water, 1¼ cups milk, 1 teaspoon grated lemon rind, 2 tablespoons orange juice, 2 tablespoons sugar, 1 dessertspoon lemon juice, ½ packet lemon jelly, wafer biscuits, cream or ice-cream.

Soften gelatine in hot water, dissolve by stirring over boiling water. Cool, gradually add milk. Fold in lemon rind, orange juice, and sugar, stir until sugar is dissolved. When cooled and beginning to thicken, fold in mashed bananas mixed with lemon juice. Fill into wetted mould, chill until set. Dissolve lemon jelly in the usual way. When cold, pour carefully into mould on top of banana mixture. Chill until firm, unmold, serve with cream or ice-cream, with wafer biscuits on the side.

SPICED BANANA FRITTERS

Five or 6 bananas, 2oz. plain flour, pinch salt, ½ teaspoon cinnamon, ½ teaspoon spice, ½ teaspoon grated lemon rind, 1 dessertspoon melted butter or substitute, 3 tablespoons warm water, 1 egg-white, lemon, sugar.

Sift dry ingredients thoroughly, add lemon rind. Make a well in centre, pour in melted shortening and water. Mix to a smooth batter, beat for 1 minute. Fold in stiffly beaten egg-white. Peel bananas, cut in halves lengthwise. Dip in batter, coating well. Deep fry golden brown in deep, hot fat or oil. Drain on clean kitchen paper, drench with lemon juice, toss in sugar. Serve at once.

BANANAS NEWBURG

Cut peeled bananas in halves crosswise, then lengthwise. Sprinkle with lemon juice, dredge very lightly with sifted flour seasoned with salt and pepper. Saute in melted butter until a delicate brown, but not soft or broken. Lift carefully on to kitchen paper, dust lightly with brown sugar. Return to small pan with ½ cup sherry, simmer 5 minutes. Serve with fried chicken.

BANANA CHANTILLY

Six bananas, sliced bread ¼in. thick, shredded or crushed pineapple (no syrup), butter or substitute, whipped cream, preserved ginger, sherry or rum.

Cut bread into strips, fry golden brown in butter. Arrange in serving-dish, spread thickly with pineapple. Top with halved bananas sauteed in butter. When cold, top with whipped cream flavored with rum or sherry, decorate with pieces of ginger.

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This same Vitamin Enrichment is now available in Australian white bread and flour.

Essential for the Health of the Whole Family

For the sake of your family's health—buy Vitamin Enriched Bread and Flour. You will find that the whole family will soon feel healthier—have more energy for work and play.

Eat More Bread!

FOR YOUR HEALTH'S SAKE . . . BUY VITAMIN ENRICHED BREAD AND FLOUR

TOPPING of toasted shredded coconut or chocolate decorettes makes a nest for colored "eggs" of almond paste. This recipe for Easter nest cakes wins £5. See below.

£5 prize for Easter cakes

Easter cakes that are decorative but simple to make win the main prize of £5 in this week's recipe contest.

THESE cakes will appeal to all the family.

Try them during the Easter season. The quantities given make approximately two dozen cakes. Another prize-winning recipe is for shortcake filled and topped with quickly made raspberry marshmallow.

All spoon measurements are level.

EASTER NEST CAKES

Four ounces butter or substitute, 4oz. castor sugar, 2 eggs, ½ teaspoon vanilla, 2 cups self-raising flour, ½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda, ¼ cup milk.

Cream butter or substitute with sugar and vanilla. Add eggs one at a time, beat well. Fold in sifted flour and soda alternately with milk. Fill into greased patty-tins, bake in hot oven 10 to 12 minutes.

Prepare Easter eggs thus: Sift 6oz. icing sugar with 1 tablespoon cornflour. Add ¼ cup fine white breadcrumbs or almond meal. Mix 1 egg-yolk with 2 dessertspoons orange juice. Add to dry ingredients, making a stiff paste. If breadcrumbs are used, flavor with almond essence. Divide into three portions. Color one portion green, one pink, and one yellow. Mould into small egg shapes with the hands. When cakes are cool ice tops with vanilla-flavored warm icing, sprinkle toasted coconut or chocolate decorettes around edge of each and arrange colored eggs in centre.

First Prize of £5 to Miss A. Stafford, 2 View Street, Cottesloe, W.A.

RASPBERRY MARSHMALLOW SHORTCAKE

Four ounces butter or substitute, ¾ cup sugar, 1 egg, ½ teaspoon vanilla, 1 cup self-raising flour (or 1 cup plain flour and 2 teaspoons baking powder).

Cream butter or substitute with sugar and vanilla. Add egg, mix well. Fold in sifted self-raising flour or plain flour and baking powder. Fill into greased slab-tin 7in. x. 10in., or 8in. or 9in. recess-tin. Bake in moderate oven 25 to 30 minutes. When cold, top with marshmallow, or split shortcake, spread half the marshmallow between layers and remainder over the top. Allow to set before cutting.

Raspberry Marshmallow: Half packet raspberry jelly crystals, ¾ cup cold water, ½ cup icing sugar.

Soak jelly crystals in water for 10 minutes. Bring to the boil, continue boiling 8 minutes. Cool, add sifted icing sugar, beat until cold and thick. Use at once.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. J. Teal, Rylands Avenue, Croydon, Melbourne.

Kitchen Notions

IF a recipe calls for 4oz. plain flour mixed with 4oz. self-raising flour, equally satisfactory results will be obtained if you use 8oz. plain flour sifted with 2 teaspoons baking powder.

VARY the flavor of beans by adding a small clove of garlic to water in which they are cooking or serve with garlic butter made by creaming butter and flavoring with finely chopped garlic.

WHEN making chocoloate icing use orange juice instead of milk or water. The flavor is delicious. Or for a change add a dash of coffee essence or lemon juice to plain chocolate icing.

OUR GARDENING SERVICE

READERS may obtain leaflets on subjects of current interest to home gardeners by sending this coupon with a stamped, addressed envelope to Box 4008, G.P.O., Sydney.

Any ONE of the following titles may be selected:

- Home-made Gadgets for the Garden.
- Plant Shrubs and Save Time, Labor, and Money.
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Name of leaflet (one only) _____

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CLOTHES WASHER

This smart, smooth-running HOTPOINT "STANDARD" Washer... your silent servant for years.

You'll be amazed how quickly the Hotpoint "Standard" Clothes Washer operates . . . . how **thoroughly** it washes the heaviest work clothes . . . . how **kind** it is to your sheerest undies. It requires no maintenance either . . . . every moving part is lubricated for life at the factory. The ½ h.p. BTH motor is rubber-mounted for quietness and is built for longest possible life. Note, too, the gleaming, easily-cleaned chromium-plated wringer and the practically everlasting porcelain enamel tub. Eliminate washday drudgery with the Hotpoint "Standard" Clothes Washer for a trifling current consumption!

HOTPOINT "DE LUXE" Washer brings super washing efficiency to your home.

The Hotpoint "De Luxe" has more features, more real value than any other washer in its class. The octagonal shape of the tub and the winged agitator give extra water turbulence . . . . the "De Luxe" wringer that **adjusts itself automatically** to the thickness of the clothes . . . . the special sediment trap prevents washed-out dirt circulating! From the oversize wringer rollers to the handy storage compartment for the wringer, the Hotpoint "De Luxe" is packed with practical labour-saving features. **Inspect an actual washer at your local Hotpoint Retailer's and see all the advantages for yourself.**

GENTLE, THOROUGH ACTIVATOR

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QUICK-ACTING PUMP

Efficient Hotpoint "Standard" pump disposes of waste water effortlessly. No delay or mess in emptying tub when washing is done.

HEIGHT EASILY ADJUSTABLE

"Standard" washer has telescopic legs that adjust height to your tubs. They are welded to skirt and can never wobble.

MAXIMUM AGITATION TUB

Exclusive octagonal shape and winged agitator combine to work out every residue of dirt and grime. Tub capacity is 11½ gals.

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Handy push-button on-off control starts or stops the Hotpoint washer instantly . . . placed conveniently to hand without taking a step.

SAFETY WRINGER RELEASE

A patented feature that throws the rollers 3" apart from either side . . . can be reset instantly by moving small lever.

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"Boil-tested Beutron Whites never crack, even in hard water"

Mrs. Jack Ferguson, of Toowoomba, Queensland, writes, "I knew the new Beutron white buttons were boil-tested, but could hardly believe they'd stand up to the hard-water that comes out of my taps, till I'd tried the same frock over and over again. I wear a lot of summer prints and white blouses and haven't had to replace a single button through cracking. They're still a perfect white, too!"

Nurses tell the same story about Beutron boil-tested "Whites" on uniforms that get regular hospital laundering. Beutron Whites are boil-tested in every known soap-powder before they leave the factory. Every button carries a money-back guarantee. Seven sparkling designs, sold on cards with 2 yds. of matching cotton. 1/6 per card.

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F2482.—Beginners' pattern for an easy-to-make pinafore dress. Sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 2¼yds. 54in. material. Special price, 2/-.

F2477.—Formal dress and jacket ensemble. Sizes 32in. to 42in. bust. Requires 6½yds. 36in. material. Price, 4/6.

F2478.—Smart button-up coat-dress. Sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 3½yds. 54in. material. Price, 3/6.

F2479.—Tailored two-piece designed with chic white collar-and-cuffs set. Sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 3½yds. 54in. material and ½yd. 36in. contrast. Price, 3/6.

F2480.—Small girl's two-piece pyjamas with contrast trim. Sizes 29in., 33in., 37in., and 41in. lengths for 2, 4, 6, and 8 years. Requires 3yds. 36in. material and ½yd. 36in. contrast. Price, 2/6.

F2481.—Autumn-into-winter suit featuring moulded jacket lines and slimly flared skirt. Sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 4½yds. 54in. material. Price, 3/6.

NEEDLEWORK NOTIONS

No. 414.—HOUSE FROCK

Useful cross-over house frock obtainable cut out ready to make. The material is spotted summer dress cotton; the color choice includes pink, sea-blue, yellow, and light green, all printed with a white spot. Full instructions for making supplied. Sizes: 32in., 34in., and 36in. bust, 30/6. 38in. and 40in. bust, 37/3. 42in. and 44in. bust, 39/6. Postage and registration 2/9 extra.

No. 415.—EASY-TO-LAUNDER SMOCK

Attractive smock obtainable cut out ready to make. The material is checked woven Dutch seersucker in green, pink, and white; green, blue, and white; and pink, blue, and white. Sizes: 32in. and 34in. bust, 29/11; 36in. and 38in. bust, 32/3. Postage and registration 2/9 extra.

No. 416.—BREAKFAST CLOTH AND SERVIETTES

An attractive cloth and matching serviettes obtainable with applique pieces traced ready to embroider. The material is a heavy quality check cotton obtainable in yellow, white, and black; red, white, and black; green, white, and black; and blue, white, and black. Sizes: Cloth, 48in. x 48in.; serviettes, 11in. x 11in. Prices: Cloth, 19/11; postage and registration, 1/10 extra. Serviettes, 1/3 each; postage, 3d. extra.

No. 417.—THREE SANDWICH D'OYLEYS

The three d'oyleys have different designs, and are obtainable clearly traced ready to embroider. The material and color choice include cream Irish linen, sheer linen in blue, lemon, green, pink, and white, and fine British cotton in blue, lemon, pink, and green. Sizes: 8in. x 11in. Price: Linen, 1/6 each; postage, 3d. extra. Set of three, 4/3; postage, 7d. extra. Price: Cotton, 1/3 each; postage, 3d. extra. Set of three, 3/6; postage, 7d. extra.

NOTE: Please make a second color choice. No C.O.D. orders accepted. All Needlework Notions over 6/11 sent by registered post.

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AN ELEGANT SWEATER TO KNIT

Smart in black and white or any favored color combined with white, this distinctive sweater is easy to knit and then embroider.

Materials: 3 skeins "Twin-Prude" 3-ply fingering wool, shade No. 2200 (navy) and 1 skein shade No. 1075 (white); one pair each No. 12 and No. 13 needles; No. 13 crochet hook; 4 small buttons.

Measurements (to fit 34-36in. bust): Length from top of shoulders, 19½in.

Tension: 9 sts. and 10½ rows to an in.

Abbreviations: N, navy; w, white.

FRONT

With n wool and No. 13 needles, cast on 117 sts. and work 3in. k 1, p 1 rib.

Change to No. 12 needles and st-st., shaping sides by inc. 1 s. at each end of next and every following 3rd row until there are 169 sts. Work 2 rows straight.

With right side facing, cast on 5 sts. at beg. of next 2 rows for sleeves (179 sts.).

Here start white yoke. Use 2 balls of n wool and twist ends at back of work when changing color to avoid making a hole.

Next Row (right side facing): K 89 n, 1 w, 89 n.

Next Row: P 88 n, 3 w, 88 n.

Next Row: K 87 n, 5 w, 87 n.

Next Row: P 86 n, 7 w, 86 n.

Cont. thus, taking 2 extra sts. into w on every row until you have 135 sts. in w in centre and 22 each side in n. With right side facing, cont. sloping yoke as before and at the same time shape shoulder and divide for neck thus:—

Next Row: Cast off 8, patt. 64, turn, and leave rem. sts. on a spare needle.

Next Row: P 2 tog., patt. to end.

Next Row: Cast off 8, patt. to end. Rep. last 2 rows until all sts. are gone.

With right side facing, join wool to rem. sts., cast off centre 35, then work on last 72 sts. to correspond with first shoulder.

BACK

Work exactly as for front until back measures 16in. Here divide for back opening.

Next Row (right side facing): Patt. 89, turn, and leave rem. sts. on a spare needle. Cont. in patt. on first half of work, sloping w sts. as before until 22 sts. rem. in n at sleeve edge.

With right side facing, shape shoulder by casting off 8 sts. at beg. of next and following 7 alt. rows, armhole edge; cast off rem. 25 sts.

Rejoin wool to rem. sts., centre back, cast off 1, then work second half to correspond.

TO MAKE UP

Press pieces on wrong side under a damp cloth. Join side and shoulder seams.

With w wool, work 3 rows of d.c. round neck.

4th Row: * 1 d.c. in 1 d.c., 4 ch., 1 d.c. in first of 4 ch., miss 1 d.c.; rep. from * all round. Fasten off.

With n wool, work 1 round of d.c. round each sleeve, then work as 4th round of neck.

Now work 2 rows of d.c. down each side of back opening, then a 3rd row down right side, making 4 button loops.

Embroider spots on back and front as shown in photograph —navy on white yoke and white on navy main part. Sew on buttons and press all seams.

AN ENGLISH design, this attractive sweater can be knitted by the beginner. Spots are embroidered by hand.

LACE and insertion trim this three-piece baby set. Directions in our new knitting book, now on sale at all newsagents, 1/6.

Our knitting book

BEAUTIFULLY fashioned overseas patterns as well as the pick of local designs fill The Australian Women's Weekly Knitting Book for 1953.

There are sweaters and blouses, a striking dress, twin sets, a cosy shoulder cape and bedjacket, a superb Afghan, "winged" socks and gloves, pullovers and cardigans for men, and a big section devoted to children's handknits.

Get your copy at your newsagent. Price 1/6.

Over-feeding is harmful to baby

By SISTER MARY JACOB, our Mothercraft Nurse

IT is in the early days of baby's life when the digestive system is learning to function that care must be taken to avoid over-feeding.

Many breast-fed infants are overfed in the first few weeks of life simply because the inexperienced mother is afraid of starving her child.

Excessive gains in weight, restlessness, wind after feeds and vomiting between feeds are signs of over-feeding.

A full chapter in "You and Your Baby," by Sister Mary Jacob, A.T.N.A., deals with natural feeding, and with the signs of over-feeding.

The book is obtainable from The Australian Women's Weekly Mothercraft Service Bureau, Box 4088, G.P.O., Sydney, or from bookshops in all capital cities. Price 8/6, postage 9d.

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Mandrake the Magician

MANDRAKE: Master magician, LOTHAR: His giant Nubian servant, and PRINCESS NARDA: Undergo a series of mysterious accidents. Narda blames her emerald ring, a priceless heirloom which has a curse, and which has brought disaster to all who have worn it. While Narda rests, Mandrake realises that someone could have engineered the accidents. He decides to examine the ring, and reaches Narda's room in time to see a menacing gun pointed at her back. NOW READ ON:

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Fashion FROCKS

Ready to wear or cut out ready to make

"AILSA" — A long-sleeved tailored shirt blouse styled with tucked fronts. The blouse is obtainable in cesora or rayon crepe-de-chine. The color choice includes sky-blue, pastel pink, and white.

Ready to Wear: In cesora, sizes 32in. and 34in. bust, 31/11; 36in. and 38in. bust, 35/9; in rayon crepe-de-chine, sizes 32in. and 34in. bust, 37/6; 36in. and 38in. bust, 39/11.

Cut Out Only: In cesora, sizes 32in. and 34in. bust, 40/3; 36in. and 38in. bust, 42/11; in rayon crepe-de-chine, sizes 32in. and 34in. bust, 28/9; 36in. and 38in. bust, 31/-

"ANNETTE" — A trim skirt designed with a centre inverted pleat and hip pockets. The skirt is obtainable in black barathea wool.

Ready to Wear: Sizes 24½in., 26in., and 28in. waist, 79/11; 30in. and 32in. waist, 82/6.

Cut Out Only: Sizes 24½in., 26in., and 28in. waist, 63/9; 30in. and 32in. waist, 65/11.

"KATHLEEN"—A smart button-up coat-frock featuring a velveteen collar and cuff trim. The material is flecked woollen tweed, obtainable in brown, green, and blue.

Ready to Wear: Sizes 32in. and 34in. bust, £7/3/6; 36in. and 38in. bust, £7/11/9.

Cut Out Only: Sizes 32in. and 34in. bust, £6/6/9; 36in. and 38in. bust, £6/9/3.

● *NOTE. Please make a second color choice. No C.O.D. orders accepted. If ordering by mail, send to address given on page 68. Frocks may be inspected and purchased immediately at Fashion Frocks, Stoddart's Building, 21 Pier Street, Sydney.*

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